



UKIP group leader in clash with mayor



Cllr Brothwood – tried to make point

A FULL meeting of Dudley Council had to be adjourned on Monday night amid angry scenes as UKIP group leader Councillor Paul Brothwood was asked to leave the chamber by the Mayor of Dudley.

The incident occurred during a meeting of the council at The Council House in Priory Road.

Councillor Brothwood was asked

to sit down by Mayor Councillor Dave Tyler during discussion of a motion that had been put forward addressing the gender pay gap and inequality at the council.

Issues

The meeting was adjourned for around 20 minutes while Councillor Brothwood was asked to leave

the council chamber. Speaking afterwards, Councillor Brothwood said: "In essence the Labour group put forward a motion and I recognised the wording of it from an article from The Guardian. I felt there could be copyright issues in place.

"I tried to make the point and the Mayor asked me to leave.

"I feel that they were trying

to silence democracy." Taking to Twitter, Labour's Councillor Adam Aston said: "Shocking scenes at @dudleymc Full Council! Only UKIP could make a motion about inequality about themselves."

The motion, that had been put forward by Councillor Cathryn Bayton, was carried once the meeting was resumed.

COUNCIL

Revamp of street lighting is delayed

A MAJOR overhaul of street lighting across the Dudley borough has been delayed because a supplier to provide suitable bulbs cannot be found.

Council bosses said they had not been able to source replacements for a quarter of the lighting on major roads. But the authority is still hoping to press ahead with a programme which would see street lighting replaced across the borough with more environmentally-friendly LED lighting, which is cheaper to run.

All lights will continue to stay on until replaced with the new LED lighting.

TRIBUTE

School sculpture in memory of Pierce

A SCHOOL in Stourbridge is planning to commission a commemorative sculpture in memory of murdered teenager Pierce Wilkinson.

Redhill School in Stourbridge will meet Black Country artist Luke Perry to discuss a statue at the Junction Road secondary school in honour of the former pupil, whose mother was also killed.

● Shocking case – page 4

GOVERNMENT

Free housing for homeless addicts

HOMELESS drug addicts in the West Midlands could be given free houses under a new Government-backed scheme.

West Midlands Mayor Andy Street has announced a bid for the region to lead a radical new trial to combat rough sleeping.

Known as Housing First, it would see a major investment in properties so homeless people can be given a place to live before they tackle drug, alcohol or mental health problems.

INSIDE

POP LEGEND'S DIAMOND DAYS



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CLUB'S ANGER AT FLARE SHAME

Report by Jamie Brassington

POLICE and club bosses are hunting football 'fans' who set off a flare injuring a woman aged in her 60s during the local derby between Halesowen Town and Stourbridge.

'Appropriate action' is to be taken against the culprits after two flares were thrown onto the pitch at Amblecote at the weekend.

Police are investigating the attack which left the victim with burns after being hit in the throat while Halesowen Town has launched its own probe.

The flares were thrown onto the pitch during the popular No 9 Derby, named after the bus route which links the two towns, that saw Halesowen win 2-1.

Disruption

Yeltz vice-chairman Dave Hawley revealed the club will replace the Halesowen fan's damaged football shirt.

A total of 2,306 supporters flocked to the War Memorial Ground in Amblecote for the match.

Mr Hawley said: "The lady in question was treated at the game and had suffered burns to her neck, as well as her injuries she is suffering from shock, and being cared for by her family.

"In the incident her Halesowen shirt was damaged and we, of course, are replacing that for her.

"For the record we do not blame anyone from Stourbridge football club, unfortunately in football a few are more interested in causing the disruption of the game for the majority.

"We will work with Stourbridge football club and West Midlands Police in any investigation they undertake to identify who threw both of the flares.



A red flare hits the pitch during the No 9 Derby between Halesowen Town and Stourbridge at the War Memorial Ground on Saturday

"The safety of our supporters both home and away is of paramount importance."

West Midlands Police is asking anyone with information to call them on 101.

Two goals from striker Daniel Udoh won Halesowen the game, while Ryan Rowe scored for the Glassboys.

The first flare, a blue one, was thrown after Udoh's first goal around seven minutes. The

second flare, a red one, was thrown after Stourbridge equalised after 63 minutes. An announcement was made on the speaker after each incident warning the culprits would be removed from the ground.

Halesowen said they would work with West Midlands Police, Stourbridge and the ground's K2 Security as part of the investigation.

The club's statement said: "The club are

investigating the incidents and if Halesowen Town FC supporters are identified as being responsible then appropriate steps will be taken.

"We have been in contact with the injured fan over the weekend.

"The vast majority of our fans support the club in the right way – let's keep it like that!"

● Yeltz on cloud No 9 - Back Page

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'Game-playing' worry over Hippodrome

CAMPAIGNERS trying to revitalise Dudley Hippodrome fear the council is 'playing a game' in talks over the lease.

Steve Daniels, from Black Country Hippodrome group, which is attempting to revive the landmark venue, said he was 'disappointed' with Dudley Council. The group claims they were rushed into submitting a report on funding opportunities after they requested the five-year lease be extended. Members have been in discussions with council officials about the future of the Hippodrome.

Black Country Hippodrome was handed keys to the building with a five-year lease and time to show their bid to revive the venue was realistic.

Dudley Council has said it will consider a request to extend the lease by 20 years but has asked for a report on the first year progress. But Mr Daniels believed they should have been given longer as they were only handed the keys last December.

The disagreement threatens to create fresh tension over the landmark building on Castle Hill, which the council had wanted to knock down prior to the rescue bid.

Motives

Bosses have always maintained plans to demolish it and create an open public area remain in the background if the revamp falls through.

Mr Daniels said: "I am worried about what their motives are. Are they playing a game by which they say they are giving us a chance but really they are not? We are working hard to make it happen but obstacles come up daily. If we have our way it will happen but if people have got ulterior motives it won't happen."

Minor works have been carried out at the former theatre, which once hosted some of the biggest names in entertainment. It is hoped theatre productions could once again run at the Hippodrome, which has been shut since 2009 and was last used as a theatre in the 1960s. Black Country Hippodrome needs around to raise £5 million.

Badgers are ruining our lives say residents

FED-UP residents are demanding council action over badgers which they say are making their lives a misery by ripping up their gardens.

More than 40 households in and around Upper Ettingshall Road, Coseley, are said to be affected by around seven large badger setts that first appeared in the area four years ago.

The badgers have wreaked havoc on properties, digging up gardens, damaging walls and interfering with building foundations.

Residents, some of whom say they are scared to leave their homes, have accused Dudley Council of ignoring their pleas for help.

"The badgers are ruining our lives," said 76-year-old Ann Southern, who lives in Upper Ettingshall Road.

Wrecked

"Some people won't come out of the house because of the damage caused."

"Our gardens have been completely wrecked. There are big holes everywhere, which means the kids can't even go outside and play."

"There are garden walls that have had their foundations affected."

"It is pointless doing any work to make your garden nice because the badgers just come out and wreck it."

"We feel we are trapped in a nightmare. A lot of us are angry at the council because they won't give us any help at all. It feels like we have been abandoned."

Their case has been taken up by Wolverhampton South East MP Pat McFadden, who has urged the council to offer more support to residents. People here want the badgers to be dealt with in a humane manner, but



Wolverhampton South East MP Pat McFadden with worried residents Ann Southern and Mary Cliff

they feel their plight is being ignored by the council," the Labour MP said. "This is an issue that is not going to go away. In fact, it is likely to get worse."

"I understand this is a difficult issue for the council, but they need to step up to the plate and give these people some help."

Earlier this year environmental

bosses from the council conducted an investigation into the impact of badgers in the area.

A report into the costs of dealing with them has been produced, but its findings are yet to be made public.

Councillor David Vickers, deputy leader of Dudley Council and the authority's cabinet member for housing, said: "Badgers are a protected

species with specific rules around dealing with them."

"We are aware of the situation with the badgers sett in this case, which is on private land."

"However, we are working with the local MP to offer suggested solutions for the residents including a report into the costs of dealing with them."

Police will return to search wood for Natalie

POLICE have ended an underwater search in woodland for missing Dudley mother Natalie Putt but vowed to continue their investigation into her disappearance 14 years ago.

They have appealed for anyone who saw "one or more people acting in an unusual manner" in the Ellowes Hall Wood around the time of her disappearance to come forward.

Specialist teams of divers had scoured pools in the woodland in Lower Gornal, less than a mile from her home.

The search started on Monday of last week after "further credible information" was received by detectives.

It came four months after officers exhumed graves at Ruiton Cemetery in the search for Natalie's body.

West Midlands Police said although nothing had been found in last week's search, there were other areas of interest in the woodland. This is likely to result in further searches in the near future.

Detective Superintendent Tom Chisholm, from the Homicide Unit, said: "Any searches of an area this size and after such a passage of time have significant complexities attached to it."

"The investigation team continues to work closely with a range of specialist search advisors and we expect to be back at the location at some point."

Town hall festival of remembrance

KINGSWINFORD'S own male voice choir will take a leading role when the annual Dudley Festival of Remembrance is being held in Dudley Town Hall on November 9, from 7.30pm.

Kingswinford-based choir The Gentlemen Songsters and Dudley Council are organising the popular event in aid of The Royal British Legion.

It will feature a service of dedication remembering those lost in conflict, followed by entertainment provided by The Gentlemen Songsters, Sovereign Brass and Lutley Community Voices.

Tickets are £5 and further information is available online at www.gsmvc.org.uk or boroughhalls.co.uk/dudley-festival-of-remembrance.html or call the ticket hotline on 01746 763850.

Sensible play is staged at church

WORDSLEY Amateur Dramatic Society is staging a play version of Jane Austen's Sense and Sensibility from October 11 to 14 at Kingswinford Methodist Church, Stream Road, at 7.30pm. To book tickets call (01384) 353662.

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Expansion of waste depot goes before planners again

THE controversial expansion of a council waste depot over playing field would start as early as next spring, if a revamped plan gets the green light.

Dozens of residents have objected to proposals to build a car park and new offices at the Lister Road site in Dudley, and Dudley North MP Ian Austin has called for the scheme to be scrapped.

But Dudley Council has signalled its intention to press on with the expansion in the new year.

Chiefs want to develop the depot, which houses its waste services staff, gritting trucks and pothole teams, by building a car park for 200 vehicles and a three-storey office block on adjacent open land, in a £1 million project.

The area includes land being used for several football pitches and residents have been horrified by the prospect of seeing the green area covered in concrete, according to a survey.

People living nearby were overwhelmingly against the proposals, which are due to go before the council's planning committee in the coming months.

Councillor Karen Shakespeare, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "We received valuable feedback from local people, and are now reviewing and amending the proposal, which will be re-submitted to the planning committee."

Comedy talent at Brierley Hill venue

TOP TV comics Seann Walsh and Patrick Monahan top a bill of five comedians at Brierley Hill Civic Hall next Saturday, October 21.

Dudley's own Wayne Beese will comper the night which also features Vince Atta and Jake Lambert.

Long-haired Walsh is best known for his appearances on Mock The Week, 8 Out Of 10 Cats and Live At The Apollo, while Monahan won ITV's Show Me The Funny.

Atta has been described as a hip-hop comedian with his comic songs and Lambert is a rising star.

Doors and bar opens at 7pm with the show starting at 8pm. It's an over 18s only event. Tickets cost £18.50, available at bhillicivic.co.uk or by calling (01384) 573381.

Water closes road

A MAJOR route from Stourbridge to Birmingham was closed due to a burst water main. Water started pouring onto Manor Way at Grange Hill, Halesowen, on Thursday. It was hoped the road would re-open this week.

Firefighters tackle mystery blaze at yard



The scene of the blaze on Oak Lane

AN investigation was being held this week into the cause of a blaze at a scrapyard in Kingswinford that saw 40 firefighters called into action to save high value machinery.

Crews were called to the site on Oak Lane at around 12.30pm on Sunday to reports of a blaze involving around 50 squared metres of scrap metal which was in danger of spreading to machinery worth many thousands of pounds.

Two fire engines from Brierley Hill were sent, however at the height of the blaze, which sent thick black smoke soaring into the air, a total of

eight fire crews attended from Dudley, Wolverhampton, Tettenhall and Bilston.

There were two seats of fire found by firefighters, according to West Midlands Fire Service spokesman Warren Davies. He said: "The need for more assistance was quickly recognised. Due to the location of the site, getting water to our engines was an issue, however this was rectified as we got the fire under control."

"Thankfully crews managed to stop the fire spreading to nearby machinery that was worth around £1 million.

This was done using tools on site. The fire was put out by 3.30pm but crews stayed on site to dampen it down."

He added that there was no explanation as to how the fire had started but enquiries were ongoing."

West Midlands Police were called to the scene to close roads in the area.

The fire was out by Sunday afternoon but crews remained on site dampening down the area and inspecting the site and carried out further checks the following morning using a thermal imaging camera to ensure there were no hotspots left.

Report reveals failings within maternity unit

THE safety of mothers and babies was put at risk at Russells Hall Hospital, a damning report reveals.

The hospital was investigated following 43 'serious incidents' over a 20-month period, including one death and five cases of 'avoidable harm'.

A report released on Tuesday has revealed a series of shocking failings within the maternity department. These include monitoring of babies' heart rates being 'misinterpreted' putting safety at risk; staff being slow to respond to urgent situations; a lack of senior paediatric support to 'assist with baby resuscitation at complex births'.

Russells Hall's process for investigating serious incidents within its maternity unit was also said to be 'inadequate'.

Documentation indicated clinicians were investigating cases but it was found this was not happening, resulting in 'missed opportunities' to prevent risk to babies in the future, the report said.

The concerns were flagged up by the Maternity Quality Improvement Board, which analysed 25 of the 43 serious incidents to see where lessons could be learned.

Alarm

The incidents were recorded between April 2014 and December 2015 and caused alarm with NHS England as they were higher than any other West Midlands maternity unit. Of the 25 that were investigated, 19 related to care affecting babies and the other six concerned mothers.

Councillor Peter Miller, cabinet member for health at Dudley Council, said the report's findings were concerning.

He said: "Questions have to be asked and we have got to find the answers. That will have to be done."

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, which runs Russells Hall Hospital, said it had since introduced a 'comprehensive improvement plan' for maternity services, which 'addresses the issues identified and provides assurance about the safety and effectiveness of the maternity services in Dudley'.

Bus hits shelter at town's station



The bus crashed into a waiting area at the town's main bus station, in Fisher Street, on Monday

DUDLEY Bus Station was cordoned off after a bus struck a shelter on Monday but luckily no one was injured in the incident.

Travellers were evacuated from Dudley Bus Station at Fisher Street following the accident.

An image showed the front end of a National Express bus lodged in the bus shelter, with the impact having caused significant damage to the shelter.

No passengers were on the bus at the time and National Express

said there were no injuries involving pedestrians or transport staff either.

However, the town centre station was closed off for a short time for safety reasons as the damage was assessed.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Extra show for wizard Wagner

AN extra performance of a panto has been announced following 'incredible demand' for the show.

There will be a matinee showing of The Wizard of Oz when it is staged in aid of Mary Stevens Hospice at Brierley Hill Civic Hall in January.

The Stourbridge hospice has organised the show, which features Wagner from TV's The X Factor, and Marlene 'the Black Country Witch'.

The show was originally due to run only on January 23 and 24 evenings but a matinee has been added on January 24. Tickets for the matinee, £10, are available at bhillicivic.co.uk or by calling (01384) 573381.

Convoy to drive up organ donation

MORE than 50 trucks travelled in convoy through the Black Country to raise awareness of organ donation.

The Kingswinford Charity Truck Convoy, which is in its fifth year, began on Saturday afternoon and saw truckers from all over the West Midlands involved.

The trucks travelled from Wolverhampton Road Holiday Inn, at junction 10 of the M6, before going through Bilston, Dudley and finishing at Kingswinford. It aims to raise awareness of organ donation and money for Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

£1,000 is raised by charity jumpers

TWO staff members who work for an energy company in the Black Country jumped out of a plane and raised more than £1,000 for charity.

Leo Chell and Lorie Hollies conquered their fears and plummeted 13,000 feet through the sky in Nottinghamshire, raising the cash for Alzheimer's Society support workers.

Leo, who works for E.ON based in Kingswinford, said: "My stepdad suffers from dementia so I know all about the impact it can have not just on the person but also on their family and friends."

Swimmers can now learn to be lifesavers

SWIMMERS are being urged to take the plunge and sign up to learn lifesaving skills on a training course.

Dudley Council is offering the course at Halesowen Leisure Centre and Crystal Leisure Centre, Stourbridge, run by the Royal Life Saving Society. The courses are open for people 16 and over who will be expected to take a swimming test. The course costs £245. See dudley.gov.uk/sport or call the leisure centres.

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Memorial to stage holiday activities

FAMILIES visiting the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire over the October half-term holiday will be able to take part in a range of historical and craft activities.

Youngsters can learn about some of the insects found in the First World War trench and twice daily at the site near Alrewas they can listen to Tales from the Trenches, at 11am and 2pm.

The replica trench system remains open until Remembrance Sunday, on November 12. Costumed interpreters will be on site on selected days.

Booking is essential for the Twilight Trek on October 21. Visit www.thenma.org.uk for details.

Acclaimed US singer in concert

ACCLAIMED American singer-songwriter Matthew E White, who has released two highly-rated albums, brings his blend of country rock, funk and Brazilian sounds to a Wolverhampton venue next week.

The producer and founder of Spacebomb Records from Richmond, Virginia, will be in concert at the Newhampton Arts Centre, near Molineux, on Wednesday (October 18) from 8pm.

Tickets cost £14 in advance and can be bought at newhamptonarts.co.uk or by calling the box office on 01902 572090.

Pupil unit to make way for housing

THE site of a pupil referral unit in the Black Country looks set to be used for homes after the building was sold.

Planning permission is already in place for the Batmans Hill centre in Tipton, but the development has taken a major step forward with the sale of the building.

Property firm Bond Wolfe confirmed the building had changed hands. A total of 19 houses and seven apartments are set to be built on the 1.5-acre site.

Magistrates court is put on the market

THE former Sandwell Magistrates Court site on Oldbury Ringway has been put up for sale as a potential development site.

The court building closed in September last year as a result of Government cost-cutting. The one-acre site has been put on the market as a freehold building and land by commercial property agents GVA.

The most shocking case I have dealt with



Violence – Det Supt Tom Chisholm

“IT is the most shocking case I have ever dealt with because of the unpredictable level of violence. There was no build up to it. It was completely unexpected and it is very unusual for there to be no clear motive for a crime of this magnitude.”

These are the comments of Detective Superintendent Tom Chisholm, head of the West Midlands Police homicide investigation team, and a detective with 22 years experience, who says he was shocked by the ferocity

and senseless nature of Aaron Barley’s murderous attack on the Wilkinson family in Stourbridge.

On March 30 Barley he lay in wait armed with a knife in the back garden of their Greyhound Lane home until Mr Wilkinson took the family dog for a walk, crept upstairs where he stabbed Mrs Wilkinson and her son. He ambushed Mr Wilkinson, then stole the family Land Rover Discovery which he crashed in nearby Norton Road when chased by police.

Det Supt Chisholm added: “It is incredibly rare for there to be an attack on a family at their home like this. Those who died and their family will remain in our thoughts.”

“This was a truly shocking incident. Clearly we deal with murder – it is our job, we deal with it on a daily basis. It is incredibly rare that we deal with an incident that has such a massive impact both on the victims’ family, the wider community and officers that investigated it.”



Evil killer Aaron Barley has been jailed for at least 30 years

Killer Barley’s threats were ignored – claim

KILLER Aaron Barley, who murdered Tracey Wilkinson and her son Pierce, threatened to kill the Stourbridge mother just three days before stabbing them – but support workers ‘ignored’ the warning, it has been claimed.

Mrs Wilkinson, aged 50, reportedly told volunteers about death threats from Aaron Barley, 24, just days before he stabbed her and her 13-year-old son to death in their home on March 30.

But support workers at the Atlantic House Recovery Centre, on Dudley Road, Stourbridge, did not inform police according to a national newspaper report. It is alleged the incident was just one of four cases of concerning behaviour that support workers did not pass on.

Barley also expressed a desire to kill in front of volunteers at Atlantic House, according to The Times. One volunteer said they were worried about his attitude to women and another was left thinking he either wanted to ‘kill a copper or a prison officer’.

Change, Grow, Live, the charity that runs Atlantic House, said managers would have immediately informed police if they had heard about the threats.

Robust

A centre spokesman confirmed that it had ‘a robust policy for reporting to the police violent intent, threats or an indication to commit a crime’. They said: “If a member of staff, volunteer or service user raises concerns – we would report this to the police immediately.”

It added that if information was kept back it was ‘out of our control to escalate to police’ and ‘no concern was ever raised or reported to Atlantic House Recovery Centre about Aaron Barley’.

Barley’s former foster mother read violent threats on his Facebook page in which he wrote about ‘taking down’ his family and reported this West Midlands Police.



Peter and Lydia Wilkinson leave court after hearing Barley plead guilty to murder



Tracey Wilkinson – it is claimed that she reported threats



Pierce Wilkinson – 13-year-old schoolboy was killed

Murderer is told that he may never be released

A DOWN-AND-OUT cocaine addict who tried to murder a businessman after slaying the victim’s wife and 13-year-old son was jailed for at least 30 years.

The judge, Mrs Justice Carr, warned that was the earliest Aaron Barley could be considered for parole in his life sentence and added: “You may never be released.”

Tracey Wilkinson and her 47-year-old husband Peter fed, financed and employed Aaron Barley after she took pity on the homeless man after seeing him sheltering in a cardboard box outside a supermarket in Stourbridge in March last year.

Tracey Wilkinson, a former British Latin American ballroom dancing champion, paid for this act of compassion with both her life and that of her son Pierce.

The 24-year-old, with a history of violence, pleaded guilty to the two murders when he appeared at Birmingham Crown Court last week.

Tracey and Peter Wilkinson’s daughter Lydia, a student, giving her victim impact statement, looked at the defendant and told him: “Aaron my parents helped you. You repaid them with destruction and heartbreak. You have obliterated my life, murdered half my family, very nearly all of it, and for this I will never forgive you.”

He admitted the attempted murder of 50-year-old volunteer charity worker Mrs Wilkinson’s husband Peter, aged 47. Mrs Wilkinson had taken Barley to an addiction clinic in Lye where she had been helped to overcome a drink problem and Mr Wilkinson had found him a labouring job at a business he ran in Wales. But Barley was sacked when drugs sent him ‘off the rails’ within a few months of starting work.

He also lost a flat found for him by the Wilkinson family who then, inexplicably, became the target of his hatred. One theory is that Barley may have seen the cancelling of his mobile phone contract, which they paid for him, as the final break between them.

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More speed cameras to roll out if funds found

SPEED enforcement cameras could be rolled out across the Black Country following a successful trial in other areas.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson is in talks with councils in Dudley, Walsall, Sandwell and Wolverhampton to see if they are willing to part-fund the scheme.

It follows a pilot in Birmingham and Solihull, which police say has led to a marked reduction in speeding.

Combined with mobile units and smart motorway cameras, the average speed cameras issued £8 million in fines over the trial period, which is due to continue until February.

There are currently 160 mobile camera sites across the West Midlands.

A report to the force's Strategic Crime and Policing board noted a drastic increase in recorded offences in the first two months the cameras went live. The number of offences detected rose from 4,000 in July to 12,000 in August and around 8,500 in September. However, the report shows that by October the number of offences had fallen 'back to normality' at around the 4,500 mark.

Mr Jamieson, an advocate of average speed cameras, said: "Speed is one of the biggest causes of deaths on the road and one of the biggest issues that local people raise with me."

It's time to apply for school places

PARENTS in Dudley can now apply for school places if their child is due to start secondary school or reception in September 2018.

Applications in the Dudley Council area can be made online and parents can also find a list of school open events they can attend to help them choose the right secondary school for their child. Applications for secondary school places can be made until October 31. Parents of those youngsters seeking places at primary school for their children have until January 15, 2018, to make their applications.

Councillor Simon Hackett, cabinet member for children's services, said: "Choosing a school is one of the most important decisions parents and carers make for their child."

Coffee at church

A COFFEE morning is being held in aid of Mary Stevens Hospice at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Netherton at 10am on October 27. Coffee, tea and cake will be available. Contact David Cole on 07504 974994.

Major shake-up of bus services on way



National Express launches a consultation

A MAJOR shake-up of bus services across Dudley borough could be on the way. National Express said changes to timetables may be needed due to the level of congestion on the roads.

An online consultation has been launched to help transport experts with the first major review of bus services in Dudley for almost a decade.

National Express say congestion has increased on the busiest routes, leading to longer journey times, particularly on Birmingham New Road.

National Express said the last major review of bus services in Dud-

ley took place in 2008. Since then, congestion had increased and many journey times had risen.

"Patterns of demand have changed and we may need to change the bus network to reflect this," said a spokesperson. "We are working closely with Transport for West Midlands, Dudley Council and other stakeholders to review the network of bus services in and around Dudley to ensure that it meets today's and future needs."

"We're considering all routes within Dudley borough as part of this review, as well as some services in

Sandwell, Wolverhampton and Birmingham. Many routes in Dudley run to and from these areas and we need to consider the wider network."

Ian Kettle, planning and economy boss at Dudley Council, said the review was 'badly' needed.

He added: "We do have pinch points and areas where the traffic flow is huge. If people are doing a lot of travelling they don't have much quality of life."

Visit www.nxbus.co.uk/west-midlands/information/service-changes/dudley-network-review-consultation

Five-year-old rescued from canal by his pal

MORGAN Bridgens didn't think twice when he saw his friend fall into the canal. By the time he got to five-year-old William Smith he had gone under the water and could have drowned had it not been for his actions.

Ten-year-old Morgan described how he managed to pull William to safety from the Black Country canal just in time. His mother Carly Smart said she was immensely proud of her son's life-saving actions.

The drama happened as the pair were playing on a rope swing on the banks on Stourbridge Canal off Longboat Lane in Wordsley. After the rope swing broke William wandered off to get another stick with the hope of fixing it.

But Morgan suddenly heard a 'big splash' and went running down a set of steps to where the noise came from. When he got to the bottom he saw Will in the water and was sinking under the surface. Morgan got onto his stomach on the canal path, outstretched his arms and pulled his friend out of the canal.

Carly, 30, a mother-of-three from Wordsley, said: "Morgan panicked at first and didn't know what to do. He told me 'I had to get him out, mom'."

Arms

"He saw Will go under two or three times. When Will went under again, Morgan got him by the arms and pulled him out."

"I didn't know what had happened when Morgan came back home. Morgan sat there all quiet and I knew something was wrong."

"When he told me I was hysterical. I said 'have you got him out?'" and he said Will had gone back to his house. I went down to Will's mom's straight away. They only live a few doors down. Will was a bit shook up but he was fine, he was recovering and was in the bath."

Morgan and William both attend Brook Primary in Wordsley. Carly's youngest son Rio, five, is in William's class, which is how the boys know each other. Carly added: "I'm really proud of Morgan. He has received lots of praise for his actions and it has opened his eyes."

She said the drama happened at the end of the



Morgan Bridgens pulled William Smith to safety after he plunged into the water and was going under

summer holidays and Carly said she wanted to highlight what happened as a warning to parents about the dangers of canals that criss-cross the Black Country.

She said: "William's parents are really grateful. We are just so proud that Morgan acted quickly."

Brook Primary School headteacher Jan Baker:

"I am very proud of him, the whole school is. He thought really carefully about what he did, he wasn't rash, he was very sensible. He kept his head and didn't panic."

"He acted like someone who was much older," she said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Wedding plans at historic hall venue

COUPLES planning to tie the knot can get inspiration at an open day at Himley Hall on Sunday.

Himley Hall is licensed to hold civil weddings and partnership ceremonies and will hold its open day from 11am to 4pm.

Couples and their families can take a look around the historic venue where royal newly-weds once took their honeymoon. Admission to the open day is free but there is a small parking charge.

Refreshments will be available throughout the day.

For further information go to dudley.gov.uk or call (01384) 817817.

Second book in author's saga

A BLACK Country author has announced the release date for the second novel in his fantasy trilogy.

Robert J Marsters, from Dudley, is in the middle of writing his trilogy, set in the fantasy world of Karrak.

In an announcement via the series' Facebook page, The Ascension of Karrak, he said: "I can now announce that the official release date for The Bane of Karrak is October 31."

He added that the book would be available from Waterstones and Amazon or direct from Austin Macauley publishers.

College assistant principal moves on

THE former assistant principal at Dudley College has got a new job at a college in Shropshire.

David Malone has been appointed as vice-principal of curriculum and quality at Telford College.

The college has joined Wellington's New College and Telford College of Arts and Technology (TCAT).

Mr Malone, who has been working in education for 14 years, took up his new position last week.

During his time at Dudley, Mr Malone oversaw significant improvements in student achievements.

Oktoberfest event with a Belgian twist at pub

A REAL ale pub in Lye is holding a two-day Oktoberfest later this month. But instead of German beers the Shovel Inn, on Pedmore Road, will be featuring Belgian beers and other strong ales.

The festival will run from 4pm until late next Friday (October 20) and from 1pm on the following day.


There will be also be Oktoberfest style live music and food stalls.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews



So many channels but little to watch

HERE has been a bit of a kerfuffle over Lavinia Woodward, the “too posh for prison” student who walked free from court after stabbing her boyfriend with a bread knife.

Judge Ian Pringle came to his decision after hearing Miss Woodward had a personality disorder, an eating disorder and a previous dependency on drugs and alcohol. Oh, and prison would damage her hopes of a high-flying career as a surgeon.

Is it just me, or is it that last sentence not just a little disturbing? I know there's a shortage of doctors and nurses, but to we really want somebody with so many issues wielding the scalpel? All I can say is I hope she uses plenty of anaesthetic.

WRITING in the esteemed British Medical Journal, Professor Alyson Pollock calls for a ban on tackling and scrumming in school rugby games, saying it puts youngsters at risk of head injuries.

I suppose if I was being cynical, I might be tempted to ask what position Prof Pollock played while she was at school.

I sort of agree with her. From my memories of playing rugby at school, the game would be infinitely more enjoyable without all that shoulder-to-shoulder jostling, and pulling your opponents down with your hands.

But I don't think Prof Pollock goes far enough. To make rugby the sort of game I would have enjoyed, they need to ban handling the ball, and all that nonsense where they touch the ball on a line and then pick it up again. In fact, get rid of all those complicated rules that a 14-year-old has no chance of understanding. A round ball would make sense, too.

A CROWD of supporters chant Jeremy Corbyn's name, and he is hailed as the next prime minister. Theresa May has a cough, and it's time to resign. I guess that's the age of television for you.

TALKING of television, isn't it amazing that, at a time when we have more channels than ever before, that there really is so little worth watching?

There are only two programmes I would take the time to bother with these days: The Apprentice, and Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away, which the broadcasters are now screening at the same time.

In the past, this would not have been a problem, because I would have recorded one on the old VHS player, but this has proved near-impossible since the digital switchover. They call this progress.

Well at least you get what you want for anniversary gift



Mayor Sadiq Khan plans to create zones where all solid fuels are banned



Feisty Scottish Tory leader Ruth Davidson wants to take the fight to Jeremy Corbyn



Jeremy Corbyn – still plenty of scope for backbench problems to confront him

More saying I Do to self-marriages

THE latest development in matrimony is self-marriage. Described as “a symbolic and feminist act,” it brings all the benefits of a traditional wedding (pretty frock, bridesmaids, big party, etc) without the complication of a partner. The bride simply pledges to love, cherish and respect herself. You may mock but self-marriages seem to last. The Times reports that one self-married lady in Vancouver got engaged to someone else but realised it was a mistake, broke it off and remains happily married to herself. Well, good luck to them all, even if their wedding anniversaries must be a tad predictable. “You bought me a what? It's just what I wanted. How did you know?”

BEFORE the blood had even dried, some survivors of this week's Las Vegas massacre were singing the praises of the US Constitution which declares: “A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.” And if the aim of guns-for-all is to create a militia, then simple logic says the people must be permitted not only shotguns and sporting rifles but military-grade weapons like the ones unleashed by Stephen Paddock.

THERE is really no point in us Brits engaging the US gun lobby in America's guns debate. We think they are bonkers. They think we are wimps. After every massacre, the response of thousands of Americans is always the same. Buy more guns. About 30,000 Americans are killed by guns every year and yet still in millions of US hearts beats the notion that guns make

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



you safer. Over the past 40 years the number of guns owned by US citizens has doubled to more than 300 million. It is believed there are now more guns in the United States than people.

NOTHING in life is simple. London's mayor Sadiq Khan plans to create zones where all solid fuels, including wood used in trendy log-burners, are banned. And who can argue with that? In a huge city like London, there are clean alternatives such as gas and electricity. But the capital is also famous for its pizza parlours. And how can you bake the perfect pizza without the traditional wood-fired oven? So what began as a common sense scheme to clean up the Great Wen has turned into an awkward little spat, with an ethnic dimension between Khan and the Piza, Pasta and Italian Food Association. From a Guardian debate on wood burning I liked this reassuring contribution: “The pizza absorbs all the poisons, then you eat it. So yeah, it's fine.”

IF the Conservatives are looking for new inspiration, or for a new leader, they must surely look North. Ruth Davidson, the feisty Scottish Tory leader, is a bundle of energy with a sharp sense of humour. She wants to take the fight to Jeremy Corbyn and I cannot name anyone more

calculated to put the fear of God into the Corbynites. How would Labour claim to speak for diversity and inclusivity when their leader was male, pale and stale but the new Tory leader was a young Scottish lass in a same-sex relationship? Davidson ticks boxes, scares the socialists and is 30 years younger than Mr Corbyn.

CORBYN has proclaimed Labour is now the mainstream political party. But he should beware. There are plenty of orthodox non-left wing Labour MPs and activists who deplore the threats of the Momentum faction to get rid of those Members who do not toe the party line. So there remains plenty of scope for backbench problems to confront Corbyn.

LET me say at the outset that there is nothing remotely funny about ramblers being chased and bitten by free-ranging pigs in the New Forest a few days ago. The pigs were said to be “out for trouble, like a gang of teenagers.” But the quote that made me smile came from the bitten walker who explained the background: “I had been warned there had been some friction between the pigs and the ponies.” Anyone else thinking of Animal Farm?

PLAIN English department. Uniper, the company demolishing an old power station in Shropshire, says it will keep the local council and residents fully informed. One councillor responded: “It is extremely encouraging to hear of Uniper's commitment to undertake proactive stakeholder communications.” Seriously, does anyone actually talk like this, going forward?

TALKING POINT



Snacks at school? Let's just roll with it

CAN you imagine the outrage when Greggs put up the prices of its sausage rolls last week?

It could add food to the fuel of bosses at Shirley Manor Primary in Bradford, however, which has banned the savoury snacks, along with pork pies and pepperoni sticks from school lunchboxes.

It has even gone so far as asking children to reveal the contents of their packed lunch before being allowed to tuck in. One has visions of an I'm A Celebrity . . . contestant showing the insides of their mouths to prove they've eaten the live cockroach for a bushtucker trial.

The school says it is to encourage healthy eating and a more physical lifestyle. But if any prohibited items are discovered the packed lunch can be taken away. How can that be good for them?

The move has been branded ridiculous by parents, who say the school should stick to teaching the children. They add the decision-makers do not take into account fussy eaters and claim they, more than any school, should know what their child likes and doesn't like.

Rightly so, in my opinion. Surely a healthy appetite just doesn't mean eating food that is supposedly good for you.

The problem I suspect, is more a health and safety issue. You see, when I was at school, dining ate into just 10 minutes of our lunch period. The rest of the time, like at other breaks, we were running around the playground, letting off steam, burning off calories, something that all youngsters should be allowed to do.

But with today's health and safety rules, it seems that the powers-that-be are scared to let children play and run around – despite being warned against obesity and a sedentary lifestyle – in case they fall over or bump into someone else and hurt themselves.

Accidents can occur at any time and in all walks of life. Surely encouraging children to be just that, while advocating the benefits of sport, would be more beneficial than telling them that they can't tuck into the buffet at Christmas.

Calls have even been made for youngsters to be banned from tackling in rugby for fear of injuries. How ridiculous! It's a key part of the game and is as much a skill as being able to sidestep a player. Surely a ban would surely reduce the game as a spectacle.

Anyone taking part in any activity would know the risks involved. So, can we just let our children grow up, educate them, teach them right from wrong and encourage them to get out and enjoy themselves more?

MARK SHIPP

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Problems ahead with monthly benefit

WHILST not wanting to join the argument about Universal Credit being introduced to replace other benefits, I feel that the one big problem is moving the payments from fortnightly to monthly.

When I worked at a large company there was a move to change wages from weekly in cash to monthly paid into a bank account, this was done on a gradual basis over a long period with help in the form of advances to help staff over the transition.

Now these were well paid people who were not on work-related benefits

as they did not exist then but, even so, some found the first couple of months a struggle.

Therefore, it is no surprise that people who are on a low income, only just managing, cannot change easily to getting nothing for a month and then one big payment which they have to budget with.

Having to make the choice of something for the kids or paying the rent cannot be easy.

Most of the programmes on television give the impression of people who have no culture of managing money,

rather they spend it like kids with pocket money.

I know these are always extreme cases just to wind the rest of us up but surely it must be seen that the money is better given out in manageable amounts.

As to large numbers being behind with their rents, it is time this was looked at again and at least in the case of social housing, which is being supported by taxpayers, the rent should be deducted at source.

RON GWILLIAMS
Brierley Hill

Admire Invictus and Harry

I HAVE been watching the Invictus Games. It makes me feel ashamed when I moan about a cold or my aching 71-year-old bones.

I saw men and women with no arms or legs, young people coming together from all over the world who competed alongside other ex-soldiers.

There were no winners or losers, every one of those people made me realise how lucky I am. I think I have problems but these great men and women are a far better person than I will ever be.

I hope the Invictus Games goes on to become as big as the Olympics, the marathon and the Tour de France. These courageous men and women never gave up. But they rose above it and thanks to the great young man Prince Harry they have put the Invictus Games on the map.

My heart and my admiration goes out to them.

KEITH PARTON
Wolverhampton

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

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Behind our backs

I am writing on behalf of myself and the other residents of School Street, Pensnett. There are two plots of land in School Street; a few months ago builders applied to buy and build on this land. Dudley Council planning department threw it out, on the grounds that the area was already overdeveloped and effects on existing residents – privacy, parking, wildlife being affected, including (supposedly) protected bats, also seven beautiful well-established silver birch trees being torn out, to name but a few of the reasons.

The builders reapplied and this time the application was handled in Bristol. Unbelievably the Bristol planning department approved it! The people who approved it don't even live here! What's angered us all in School Street is none of us were informed about the application being approved, we only found out by chance, this was all done behind our backs.

LEE THOMAS
Pensnett

Many will be left bankrupt

THE Bank of England continues to predict interest rate rises, because inflation is running ahead of wage rises.

This would mean a 'double whammy' for those buying their own homes, an increase in mortgage payments and in any credit card payments.

I fail to see how those who are 'just about managing' will be able to afford this.

The Bank of England has also made clear there will be no more buying of bank shares to counter a surge of bad debt. The banks must ensure enough reserves to deal with another downturn.

This means large numbers of ordinary people facing bankruptcy.

Yet I have not heard a word from either of the two main party leaders about this.

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£2.5m teaching block unveiled at academy



Opening the refurbished block, executive principal Marie McMahon with pupils Ethan and Shaylee, both aged 12

THERE was cause for celebration at a student academy in Tividale as a teaching block was officially opened.

Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy, at Lower City Road, unveiled its latest development as a £2.5 million bid to accommodate more students came to fruition.

Completed in August, the new main building, otherwise known as C-Block, will look to house the academy's increasing number of students. The institute has been oversubscribed for the last four years.

Executive principal, Marie McMahon, said: "We are delighted that our academy is now so popular that we have been asked to expand."

"We welcomed a record number of families to our open events this week - over 300 in total."

"As well as expanding our capacity to accommodate for increasing demand, this new building will provide fantastic new state-of-the-art facilities for our students."

Work started on the building in October last year and was completed last month.

New equipment, including interac-

tive whiteboards, have been installed in the 12 classrooms at C-Block. The new build also includes expanded facilities for the Learning Support Department, including offices where learning mentors will be based.

Principal McMahon added: "I am so pleased and proud that our students now have such a fantastic, spacious and beautifully equipped learning environment. "This, coming just after our best set of results ever, underpinned by all the superb hard work of students, staff and our community, is yet another positive milestone on our school journey towards outstanding."

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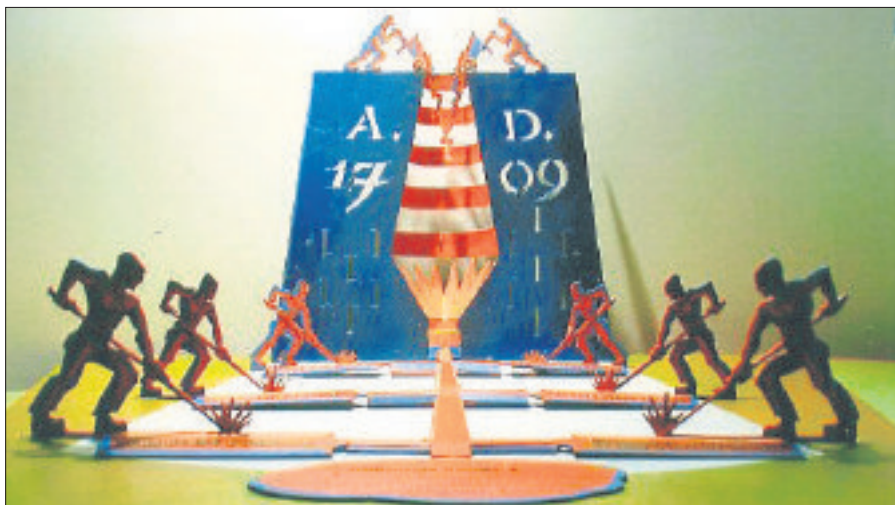
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First look at tribute to industrial pioneer



The model of the monument planned for Dudley to honour Abraham Darby, who helped start the Industrial Revolution

THIS picture shows how a new monument honouring a pioneer of the Industrial Revolution could look when it is erected in Dudley.

The model, designed by Dudley Council, shows what the monument planned for the Woodsetton area in tribute to Abraham Darby could look like.

Abraham Darby, born in Dudley in 1678, pioneered a new more effective way of producing iron. He later moved to Ironbridge and helped kickstart the Industrial Revolution. His grandson, Abraham Darby III, went on to build the world's first iron bridge in 1779, which still spans the River Severn at the town which was named after it.

Library link faces closure

A SELF-SERVICE public library at a school is facing the axe due to dwindling users and fears over safeguarding.

Council chiefs have backed a consultation into the future use of Woodside Library in Dudley, which has seen a decline in users over the last six months. The decision has partly been put down to concerns about the public accessing Woodside Primary School.

Councillor Peter Miller, Dudley's cabinet member responsible for libraries, said: "Since it opened in 2008, Woodside Library Link has served a small population, but in recent months we have seen a rapid decline in its use.

Leisure

"The school, the council and Greenwich Leisure Limited - who will be taking on responsibility for library services soon - all agree the location of

the library link in the school reception is no longer suitable. I have to stress, this isn't a decision we take lightly."

Sally Bloomer, headteacher at Woodside Primary, said: "With access to the building limited to school times and a lack of demand for the library link, it leads us to the conclusion that the school is no longer the best location for this council service. We will work with and support the local authority as the consultation progresses."

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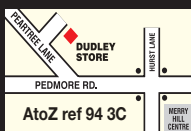


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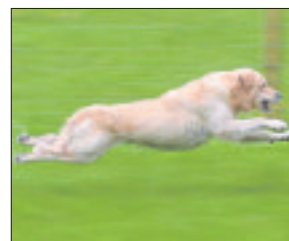
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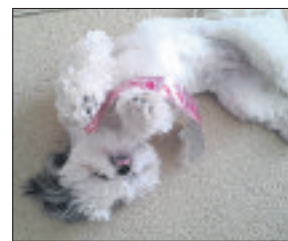
Competition entries keep flooding in



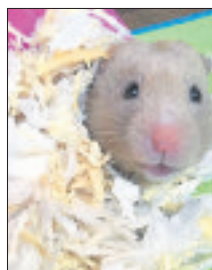
Olaf the rabbit with his friend Anya



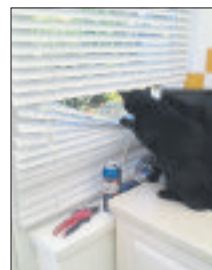
Barney in full flight after a tennis ball



Mia enjoys ripping up a party hat



Hamster Wilbur peeps out



Kevin likes to be nosy



Dougal just loves walks



Jasmine the toe nibbler

Don't you just love them, big and small?

WELL it is obvious how much we all love our pets. This is the third week pictures have flooded in in response to our Animal Crackers competition and our basket of hopefuls just keeps growing and growing.

From cute and cheeky to athletic we have had a vast range of entries. It is going to be a difficult job for you readers to judge but we hope you are enjoying seeing the pictures!

But we still want more. Send us a



picture of your beloved pet and as well as the chance to see your pet in print, you could also win a £100 cash prize. It can be any animal as long as it is

a pet belonging to you or a member of your family.

Our Chronicle judges are simply looking for interesting pictures. We will select 10 of our favourite pictures and then it is up to our readers to decide on the winner.

To enter email the images to sue.attwater@expressandstar.co.uk with your name and details, including where you are from and a bit of information about your pet.



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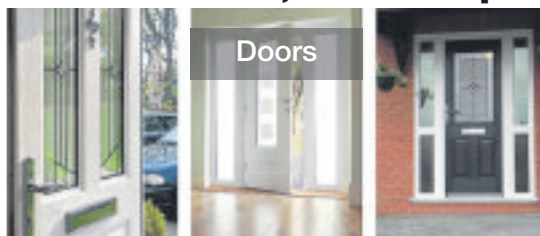
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More armed police operations in region

WEST Midlands Police has launched more than 1,000 armed operations in the last six months as the force battles to contain the region's growing gang problem.

Chief Constable Dave Thompson said the 1,054 operations since April were a mixture of swoops that were intelligence led and those that involved spontaneous responses to incidents. He said the figure represented a 'slight increase' on the same period last year, and said it highlighted the need to 'dismantle' gang activity across the West Midlands.

So far this year, 118 guns had been voluntarily surrendered to West Midlands Police, including 37 operational guns and 28 imitation firearms.

Mr Thompson told a meeting of the Strategic Policing and Crime board that the number of firearms incidents across the region averaged around 170 a month.

He said that a 'broader partnership effort' was needed between police and other agencies to combat the use of firearms. "We are doing a lot of work around disrupting and targeting offenders," he said, adding that it was vital the force worked with young people.

Mr Thompson added: "I would appeal to those who are concerned about things happening in their area to immediately contact us directly or through Crimestoppers."

Kidnapped model defends book deal



Chloe Ayling – offered 'a few thousands' for her story

MODEL Chloe Ayling has defended profiting from her alleged kidnapping ordeal – involving two Polish brothers based in the Black Country – after being paid for television interviews and writing a book.

The 20-year-old claims she was snatched, drugged and held hostage for six days by a group called Black Death after being lured to a fake modelling shoot in Milan in July.

But she has attracted criticism for the way she has handled herself in the media since the incident, with some claiming it was a publicity stunt.

Speaking on ITV's Good Morning Britain, 20-year-old mother-of-one insisted that the truth would be revealed when those accused of being involved in her abduction appear in court. She revealed that she will be getting a 'few thousand pounds' in a book deal and added that she was also paid for some interviews.

Alleged captor, Lukasz Herba, 30, who was living in Tiv-idale, is in custody in Milan. His 36-year-old brother Michal Herba, is to be extradited to Italy but plans to appeal the ruling. Both deny knowingly taking part in a crime.

Spooky treats on witch trail at park

A MONTH-long Spooky Spectacular allows children to follow clues among life-sized sweets to find a gingerbread house at West Midland Safari Park.

However, the wicked witch who resides in the house on the Trick or Treat Trail at the attraction may either give them a treat or a trick. This year's festival also sees the return of Dino Quest with a whole new adventure.

Head entertainments officer Matt Nock said: "We are all so excited about Halloween this year, especially the addition of our new gingerbread house and resident witch."

Opening hours will be extended until 9pm on weekends and the October half-term holiday.

Guests are encouraged to dress up. Spooky Spectacular is included in the standard admission of £23 for adults and £18 for children aged three-to-15 years and £21 for concessions.

Praise from national judges as towns bloom with awards

VOLUNTEERS have been praised in Halesowen and Quarry Bank after their work was recognised at the regional Britain in Bloom awards.

Halesowen won a coveted gold award for the third year running, meaning the town will go on to com-

pete for the national crown. And fast-improving Quarry Bank was awarded silver gilt, one up from the silver it earned last year with its debut entry.

Councillor Karen Shakespeare, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "This is very much testament to the very strong sense of community spirit in both Halesowen and Quarry Bank. The Heart of Eng-

land in Bloom judges lavished praise, and rightly so, on the teams of volunteers, residents and shopkeepers who have worked so hard in both areas to get them looking beautiful."

The Halesowen in Bloom team were named 'Urban Community' category winners.

The leadership of group chairman Eve O'Connor was also praised by the judges.

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All-Stars will turn out at charity match

DUDLEY Town Football Club will again clash with Wolves All-Stars to raise funds for charities.

The teams will go head-to-head at The Dell Stadium in Brierley Hill for the first since Wolves 'thrashed' the Dudley boys 6-0.

But there is more than just pride at stake this year as the sides are hoping to raise more than last year's total of £600 for the children's ward at Russells Hall Hospital and the Mayor of Dudley's charities - Dudley Mind, Dudley Alzheimer's and the YMCA Empty Rooms project.

Mayor Councillor Dave Tyler said: "It's always a great event and the more crowds we can get the better. It's a fun afternoon. We're hoping to get a couple of ex-Albion players down as well. If it becomes a regular thing then that's good for the charities."

The mayor said the he was prepared to dig out his soccer boots.

"I have got a pair of football boots but I won't be doing much running,"

he said. "I might kick off and I might pass it a few times but I'm certainly not going to work a sweat up."

It was former player and artist Jody Craddock leading the Wolves to a comfortable win under the wing of Wolves All-Stars manager Mel Eves last year. Eves, who enjoyed a fruitful career at Molineux between 1975 and 1984, has been in charge of the All-Stars charity team since 1997 and will look to repeat their previous success.

But Dudley Town chairman Stephen Austin has called for a better home results this time after his side took a hammering in their last meeting.

Mr Austin said: "Dudley are hoping to have about four ex-professionals playing for us. It should be a really good game, we are looking to seek revenge after we got thrashed."

Tickets for the match, which kicks off at 2.30pm on November 19, cost £5 adults and £3 children and OAPs. Call 07412 046050.



Mel Eves, Mayor Dave Tyler and Dudley Town chairman Stephen Austin look forward to the charity match

Probe is launched after police dog bites man's leg

AN INVESTIGATION has been launched after a man was injured by a West Midlands Police dog in Birmingham.

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) has begun the probe after the incident last month.

It happened on September 4 after police responded to a report that roof tiles were being stolen from a building at the former North Worcestershire Golf Course in Northfield.

Officers were engaging with a group of people on the site when a police dog seized a man by the leg.

Wounds

The man was taken to hospital with bite injuries and has made a complaint to police about the incident.

IPCC Commissioner Derrick Campbell said: "Footage from this incident has been circulated widely through social media. It appears the man suffered some quite nasty wounds and I hope he makes a swift and full recovery."

"An independent investigation is now under way which will look at the circumstances and in particular how and why the dog was deployed."

Car makers urged to improve security

CAR crime in the West Midlands has rocketed over 12 months and the figures have prompted the region's police and crime commissioner to blame manufacturers for failing to protect customers.

Thefts of vehicles has increased in the West Midlands by more than 40 per cent. Figures released this week show there were 5,930 vehicle thefts in 2016, up from 4,161 in

2013. Commissioner David Jamieson has called for 'tough police action' to reduce the number of vehicle thefts.

He has also written to leading manufacturers urging them to improve security measures to make their vehicles more difficult to steal.

Mr Jamieson said: "The rise in vehicle thefts is concerning. It shows crime is rising not falling as the Government insists."

Minister

"I have been raising this issue with West Midlands Police to ensure a more robust response and I raised it with the Policing Minister too."

"In addition to recruiting officers to tackle crimes, I have called on leading manufacturers to bring in measures to protect their vehicles from theft. As well as tough police action, it is important manufacturers take responsibility to ensure their vehicles are much more difficult to steal."

"Manufacturers are failing in their duties to protect their customers. The

By Peter Madeley

manufacturers should face up to their responsibilities and ensure the expensive vehicles they sell are not as vulnerable to hacking and theft.

"Many have long warranties, manufacturers should ensure vehicles are protected for the life of the vehicles they sell."

Police say they have responded to the spike in crime by working in partnership with British Transport Police (BTP) to ramp up patrols on the region's roads.

Overall, crime on public transport has risen by 18 per cent in 2017-18, according to a report to the West Midlands Police Strategic Police and Crime Board.

Assistant Chief Constable Marcus Beale said the 'significant' increase in rail crime was largely related to vehicle thefts by criminals targeting car parks at railway stations. He added that the force had recently made a key arrest due to intelligence gathered by the Central Motorway Police Group.

Gin and jazz at pub

A REAL ale pub is branching out by staging a three-day gin and jazz event next month.

More than 100 gins will be featured in an Art Deco-themed marquee at The Swan in Long Lane, Halesowen, during the festival from November 9 to 11. There will be music from jazz singers and musicians during the event.

The pub had been destined to become a convenience store before Black Country Ales stepped in to rescue it.

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In the Dudley and Netherton area, the following practices are working in partnership to provide additional GP appointments.

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- 2 St James Medical Practice (Dr Porter)
- 3 Eve Hill Medical Practice
- 4 Steppingstones Medical Practice
- 5 Cross Street Health Centre
- 6 Central Clinic
- 7 Bean Road Surgery
- 8 Keelinge House Surgery
- 9 Links Medical Practice
- 10 Hazel Road Surgery
(Links Medical Practice Branch)
- 11 Netherton Health Centre
- 12 Dudley Wood Surgery



Your appointment may be with another practice in the Dudley and Netherton area and may not be at your registered practice.


Thinking Differently

Vigil for Vikki held at scene of fatal accident



Residents of Wood Road and Wood Avenue attended the memorial to pay tribute to their friend and neighbour

A VIGIL has been held in memory of a young woman who died in a car crash near her home in Dudley.

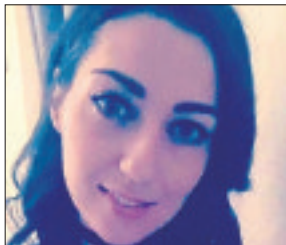
Vikki Jones, aged 30, died in the collision in Wood Road, Lower Gornal, at around 10.10pm on September 22 at the junction of Wood Avenue. Ms Jones was treated at the scene by paramedics but died. An 11-year-old girl, understood to be Ms Jones' daughter, was treated in hospital for arm injuries.

On Friday evening residents from

the area held a candlelit memorial service at the scene of the crash. The vigil saw readings given, along with a celebration of Ms Jones' life before a two-minute silence was held at 10pm.

It comes after residents asked for traffic calming measures. Floral tributes were laid at the scene and her family released a touching statement saying: "We lost the most beautiful, caring, loving, funny, kind hearted person you could ever wish to meet."

A 21-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving and released on bail.



Vikki was aged 30 when she died

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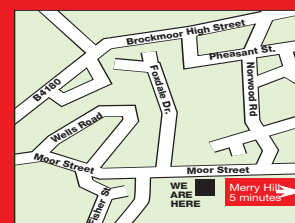
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Clergy are appointed canons of cathedral

FOUR vicars have been appointed honorary canons in recognition of their work in both the Worcester diocese and the wider church.

They were chosen by the Bishop of Worcester and will form a bridge between the diocese and Worcester Cathedral, where they were installed in their new roles.

Jan Humphries, lay minister in Gornal and Sedgley; the Reverend Sue Oliver, vicar of St Mark's Church in Pensnett; Reverend Alex Vaccaro, associate priest in the Kidderminster Ismere team; and Reverend Rob Hall, Rector of the Halas Team in Halesowen, were appointed.

The bishop, the Rt Rev Dr John Inge, said: "These people who have given and continue to give outstanding service to the church in the Diocese of Worcester. They will be great ambassadors for the cathedral in the diocese and vice versa."

Mr Oliver said: "I am so very humbled and thankful for this invitation to be installed as an honorary canon at Worcester Cathedral, the place where I was ordained priest and love so much."

Mr Hall added: "I have known and loved Worcester Cathedral since first visiting it as a 12-year-old boy from Stourbridge.



Bishop of Worcester the Rt Rev Dr John Inge with the newly appointed canons at Worcester Cathedral

Old £1 coins soon no longer legal tender

A BUILDING society is urging people to check piggy banks, old handbags and the back of their sofas for old-style £1 coins while they remain legal tender.

Any of the 'old' circular £1 coins will only be able to be traded in at banks and building societies after the October 15 deadline – this includes branches of Dudley Building Society.

The new 12-sided £1 coin entered circulation at the end of March with much less publicity than was seen for the changes in £5 and £10 notes. This has led to concern a number of people will be left with coins that are unable to use in the shops

The new coin has been branded the most secure in the world with 1.5 billion of them now in circulation.

The society, which has branches in Brierley Hill, Gornal, Kingswinford, Perton and Dudley town centre, will accept the old coins from both members and non-members.

Thousands of vehicles seized in crackdown

POLICE have seized more than 11,500 cars from uninsured drivers in the West Midlands over the last 12 months, figures have revealed.

The vehicles were recovered from roads across the region and can be impounded or destroyed under current police powers. It comes as the force launched a clampdown on uninsured drivers.

According to figures revealed in a report to the region's Strategic Policing and Crime board, West Midlands Police (WMP) seized 11,550 cars in 2016/17.

The figure includes 268 vehicles that were seized in one week alone in October 2016, and comes ahead of the force's No Insurance Week of Action, which is due to start on Monday.

The report says that 47 per cent of the vehicles recovered for no insurance had been spot checked by traffic or motorway patrol officers.

The region's Police and Crime Commissioner, David Jamieson introduced powers to seize and destroy uninsured vehicles when he was a road safety minister in 2004.

He said: "This was in answer to the menace of uninsured drivers, who are often in untaxed and unsafe vehicles.

Majority

"I know that the vast majority of law-abiding motorists will welcome this action by West Midlands Police as they are sick of paying the price for uninsured drivers." WMP works closely with the Motor Insurance Bureau (MIB) to tackle uninsured drivers.

The MIB shares its database of uninsured vehicles on a weekly basis, which enables police forces to target enforcement against ve-



PCC David Jamieson

hicles that are known to be uninsured.

The force says that although it doesn't have the resources to investigate a vehicle every time it flags up on an automatic number plate recognition camera, officers do have the power to seize and destroy vehicles that are stopped.

Earlier this month the MIB revealed that accidents involving uninsured drivers have increased for the first time since 2004.

Over the last year claims have gone up by 10 per cent to reach 12,000.

The rise bucked the trend of a steady decrease in claims every year from 2004-2016.

Ashton West, chief executive at the MIB, said the figures highlighted the devastating impact of uninsured driving on communities and families.

Mayor visits 50th firm

THE Mayor of Dudley has reached the halfway mark in his pledge to visit 100 businesses in the borough during his year in office.

Councillor Dave Tyler's visit to The Alan Nuttall Partnership was the 50th business he has seen so far. Councillor Tyler said: "We are lucky to have so many vibrant, ambitious businesses in the borough and it has been fascinating visiting them to find out more about their work."

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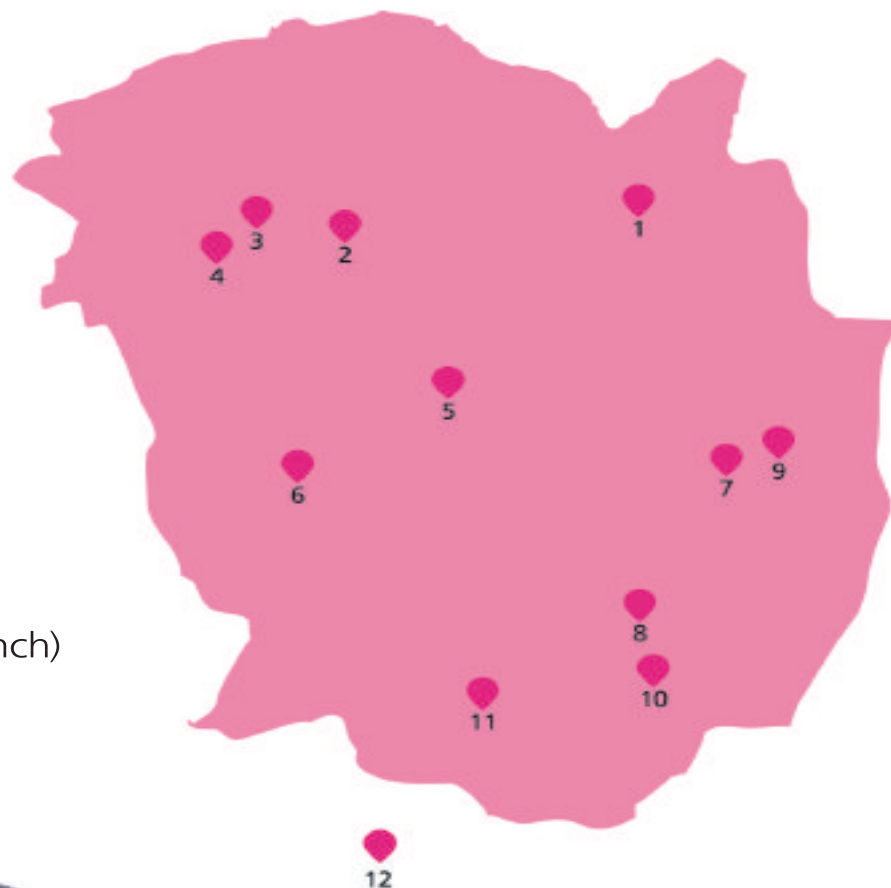
If you need access to an evening or weekend **non-urgent** appointment, please call and speak to the receptionist at your registered practice during normal opening hours.

In the Kingswinford, Amblecote & Brierley Hill area, the following practices are working in partnership to provide additional GP appointments.

- 1 High Oak Surgery
- 2 Kingswinford Medical Practice
- 3 Moss Grove Surgery
- 4 Summerhill Surgery
- 5 Rangeways Road Surgery
- 6 Wordsley Green Health Centre
- 7 AW Surgeries
- 8 Withymoor Surgery (AW Branch)
- 9 Waterfront Surgery
- 10 Quincy Rise Surgery
- 11 Three Villages Medical Practice

Out of Area

- 12 Wollaston Surgery (Three Villages Branch)



Your appointment may be with another practice in the Kingswinford, Amblecote & Brierley Hill area and may not be at your registered practice.

Thinking Differently



Adult social care recruitment drive

Commercial feature

"Transforming services for the most vulnerable in our community and ensuring they are treated with respect, care and kindness is a top priority for us at the council" explains Councillor Nicolas Barlow, Dudley Council's cabinet member for adult social care.

It's this commitment to improving services that is the driving force behind the council's recent recruitment campaign, which will see the authority employ dozens of new staff to help meet the increasing demands on adult social care and reduce pressures on the NHS.

Over the next few weeks the authority is seeking to recruit dedicated, passionate and caring people who all share the same ambition, to change the lives of people across Dudley borough for the better.

A number of fixed term posts are being advertised in various positions, including home care assistants, assistant care co-ordinators and a team assistant.

A full list of more than 60 full time equivalent adult social care jobs including occupational therapists, social and senior social, support workers and night sitters can be found at www.dudley.gov.uk/ascjobs

Dedicated

The new staff will work within a number of new teams, which will be dedicated to reducing delayed transfer of care, improving the way people move through the system, giving greater opportunity to provide crisis support within a person's home and improving the success of preventative services, which are designed to help people remain independent within their own home.

Funding for the new recruits will come from Dudley council's one-off grant of £13.9million, awarded by the government earlier this year as part of a national £2billion improved better care fund.



Senior Occupational Therapist Jennifer Robbins talks options with Mrs Marjorie Hill and Maria Perks

Councillor Barlow continues: "We are an authority that is forward thinking and dedicated to doing what we can to help people change their lives for the better.

"We can use this funding to significantly boost our numbers of staff and to create specialised teams to work in areas where we know we need to provide more support.

"It's essential we act now to ensure we can meet the growing demands on services now and in the future.

"This funding is to help improve the performance of the Urgent Care system, specifically by Reducing Delayed Transfers of Care (DTC). Dudley Council is putting every

effort into achieving this with NHS partners."

In this first year, the council has committed £7 million of its improved better care fund grant.

It will be used to launch the council's emergency response team, which will help people who have gone to the hospital's accident and emergency department and need urgent social care support, to return home and prevent an unnecessary admission into hospital.

The team will provide support in the home, give guidance on self care and introduce assisted technology where necessary. This is expected to prevent hundreds of hospital admissions.



Dudley's Home Care Service received a good rating from the Care Quality Commission

Money will also be invested in a community response team to support the West Midlands Ambulance Service when responding to emergency call-outs.

A team of social care and health workers will be able to offer crisis support to people to help them stay in their own home.

Needs

Another measure will offer a full assessment to people in need of 24-hour support and will take place away from a hospital setting.

This will give people time to recover and allow staff to gather evidence and build a picture of the person's needs in order to help them,

and their family or carers, determine how they should be cared for long term.

Nearly half a million pounds will be spent developing a new approach to how we move and transfer people in their home. Traditionally two members of staff would be needed to operate existing equipment but this new approach will see new aids being introduced, which will only need one social care worker or the individual alone to operate them, freeing up staff time to carry out other duties.

The final measure will be to introduce length of stay targets to reduce delays of hospital discharges for people who are medically fit to return home.

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Get down and get with Slade Alive!

ALBUMS

by Leon Burakowski

THINK of Slade and most folks conjure images of outrageous 1970s gear or hear perennial festive earworm **Merry Xmas Everybody**.

What many forget is just what a great rock 'n' roll band the Black Country hit-makers were.

To prove that point, the group's classic album **Slade Alive!** has been reissued by BMG as a handsome hard-back cover CD with 28-page booklet or, for the retro groovers, 180g vinyl with six-page 12 inch booklet.

Marking the 45th anniversary of its original release, this seven-track blast from the past shows a band at their most comfortable performing live.

Energy

Famously recorded for just £600 in a London recording studio in front of an invited audience of fans, the album still resonates with raw energy.

Noddy Holder rules the roost, joking with fans that he has to find the right key before unleashing that famous Black Country roar, while the formidable rhythm section of Jim Lea and Don Powell keep up a stomping bluesy beat, as Dave Hill contributes vigorous guitar and asides.

The album came out just before Slade became Top Of The Pops regulars with a string of hits. This is the sound of a hard-gigging band that knew how to get an audience ready to Get Down And Get With It, the name of the Bobby Marchan soul stomper that



Slade back in the early 70s – Noddy Holder, Don Powell, Jim Lea and Dave Hill

they cover here and was their debut hit.

Slade originals In Like A Shot From A Gun, Know Who You Are and Keep On Rocking are performed alongside covers of Ten Years After's Hear Me Calling, John Sebastian's Darling Be Home Soon and, Slade's favourite set closer, Steppenwolf's Born To Be Wild.

Raucous, fun and wild, it's easy to see why this inspired Joey Ramone to form the band that kickstarted punk and led Noel Gallagher to cite Slade as one of the great British rock bands.

When it comes to great bands on stage, American connoisseurs of the wilder realms of vintage rock 'n' roll, The Cramps were hard to beat. The death of singer Lux Interior in 2009 ended their reign as most exulted potentates of rockabilly and surf beat but the spirit lives on in the Cherry Red Records 60-track various artists compilation **Jukebox In Crampsville**.

Inspired by Lux and his partner Poison Ivy's rare record collection, this plunders the more obscure corners of

1950s and 60s rock 'n' roll, blues, jazz, doo wop, surf and exotica for some gems and quite a few weird novelties. Only a few familiar names appear, including some blues and country artists who went on to find mainstream success with less esoteric material. But these lo-fi offerings, featuring lots of honking horns and twangy guitars, have vintage appeal.

Cherry Red's Doctor Bird imprint has released on CD a couple of excellent early reggae albums. Derek Harriot & The Crystalites' **Psychedelic Train** is an expanded edition of one of the legendary Trojan label's best-sellers of 1970 featuring sweetly sung rocksteady and tight instrumentals. Highlights include Message From A Black Man and Laugh It Off. Various artists album **Gay Feet** showcases Sonia Pottinger's label of that name which found success in mid-60s Jamaica with its soulful R&B and ska instrumentals, particularly those featuring trumpeter Baba Brooks.

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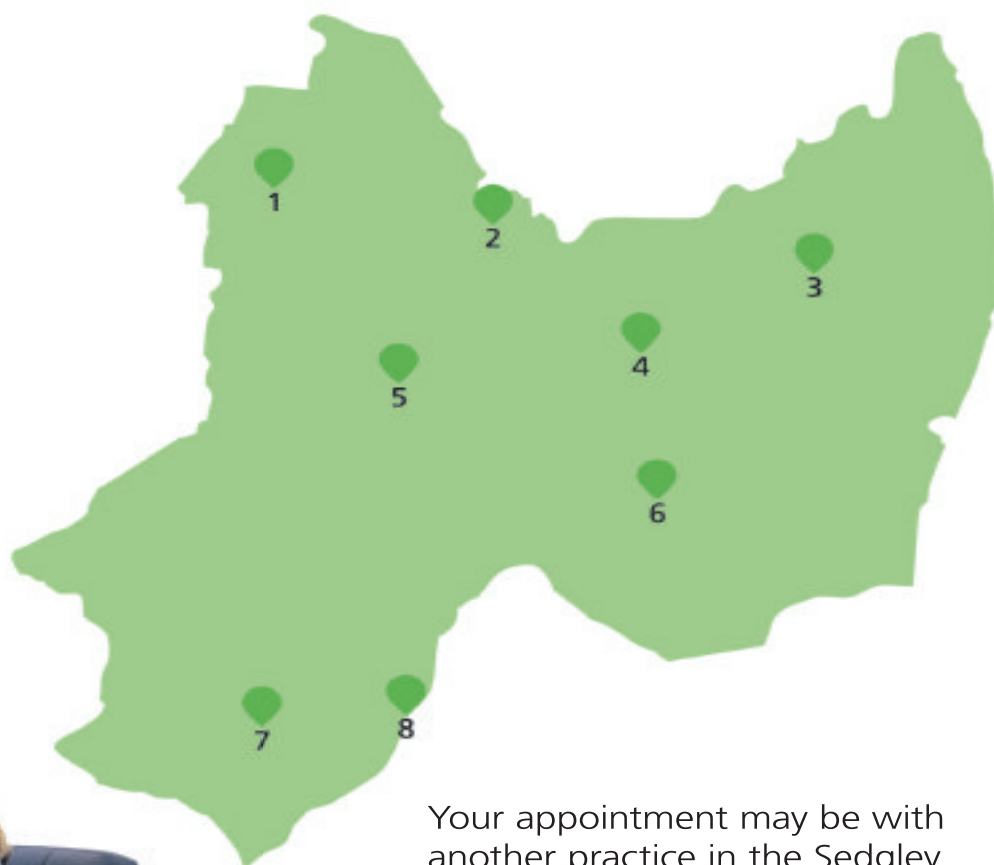
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- 4 Woodsetton Medical Centre
- 5 The Ridgeway Surgery
- 6 The Greens Health Centre
- 7 Lower Gornal Health Centre
- 8 Castle Meadows Surgery



Your appointment may be with another practice in the Sedgley, Coseley and Gornal area and may not be at your registered practice.



Thinking Differently

22 Mental health trust spending less on temps

Dudley Chronicle Thursday, October 12, 2017

A MENTAL health trust spent almost £4 million on temporary staff over the last 12 months.

Figures have revealed a total of £3.9 million was paid out on agency workers by the Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust in the year to October.

But the trust said the amount was down from 2015/16 when £6.5 million was spent on temporary staff. The spend is in line with the NHS agency cap, which health organisations should not go above.

Bosses at the trust, which provides mental health services to children and adults in the two boroughs, said they had been working hard to reduce agency spend in recent years. A greater focus was now put on recruitment and using bank staff and that was credited for getting the figure down.

A spokesman for the Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership Trust, said: "We have reduced agency spend since 2015/16 from £6.5 million down to £4.8m in 2016/17.

"We are on target to meet the NHS Improvement agency figure for this year of £4m through a number of initiatives including making use of our bank staff and also by recruiting staff to roles.

"We have been working hard to reduce agency costs and meet the NHS target."

NHS bosses have moved to cut the amount being spent on temporary workers.

Grant helps school to build for early years

A SCHOOL has been given the green light to build an early years facility after receiving a grant of more than £400,000.

The building will be created at Netherbrook Primary School in Netherton after the Education Skills Funding Agency awarded £407,000 to Dudley Council, who will also give £145,000 for the project.



The Glass Blower captures the atmosphere of Stourbridge industry



Painter Keith Turley at work at his easel



The Printer shows another man at work.



The Engine Driver captures what it is like in control on the tracks

Art imitates working lives

AN ARTIST from Dudley who has captured Morecambe and Wise and Dusty Springfield on canvas is putting his work on show.

The display at the Wyre Forest Gallery at Bewdley Museum is part of the Worcestershire town's literary and music festival.

People engaged in everyday work

is the the fascination for portrait painter Keith Turley and Bewdley Festival organisers have arranged for the free admission exhibition, entitled A Fair Day's Work, to run until October 29.

Keith, 68, from Wall Heath, is a member of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists and Dudley Society of Artists and is also president of the Birmingham Arts Circle.

Although this will be his first exhibition in Worcestershire his work is well-known as he has carried out numerous prestigious commissions, including paintings of Leslie Phillips, Morecambe and Wise, Norman Wisdom, Tommy Cooper and Dusty Springfield. He has also illustrated books about the Only Fools and Hoses and the Dad's Army television series and the Carry On films.

Keith prefers human subjects, often working on a large scale and showing people in work environments.

He said: "There are 28 works on show in the exhibition. I am very honoured to have been asked to take part as the county is not short of artists and it is a privilege to be staging this exhibition. Much of my work has a strong Black Country flavour with

The Chainmakers inspired by the Black Country Living Museum and a glassworker from The Red House Glas Cone. There are also other Black Country linked paintings. They are quite large, some five feet high, and not the sort people hang on their walls.

He will be talking about his work at the museum on October 14, 17, 19, 21, 22, 24, 28 and 29.

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NEW CLASSES opening due to popular demand

PILATES	**NEW**
Beginners @ The Oakfield Centre:	
Fri 3 Nov. 11.05-12.05.	7wks. £29.40#
BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE	**NEW**
Introduction: Mon 30 Oct. 09.30-11.30.	4 wks. £30.40#
WAR POETRY WORKSHOP	**NEW**
Thurs 16 Nov. 18.30-21.00.	1 wk. £17.15#

LANGUAGES

FRENCH	
Beginners: Mon. 30 Oct. 19.00-21.00.	6wks. £41.40#
Improvers: Tues. 31 Oct. 19.00-21.00.	6 wks. £41.40#
Advanced: Thurs 2 Nov. 19.00-21.00.	6 wks. £41.40#
ITALIAN	
Beginners: Mon 30 Oct. 14.30-16.00.	6 wks. £34.20#
Intermediates: Mon 30 Oct. 12.00-14.00.	6 wks. £41.40#
SPANISH	
Beginners: Tue 31 Oct. 19.00-21.00.	6 wks. £41.40#
Beginners: Tue 31 Oct. 12.30-14.00.	6 wks. £34.20#
Beginners: Wed 1 Nov. 11.30-13.00.	6 wks. £34.20#
Cont Beg: Tue 31 Oct. 14.30-16.00.	6 wks. £34.20#
Improvers: Wed 1 Nov. 09.30-11.00.	6 wks. £34.20#
Intermediates: Wed 1 Nov. 14.00-15.30.	6 wks. £34.20#

BASIC COMPUTER COURSES

COMPUTERS : THE BASICS	
Mon 30 Oct. 14.30-16.30.	3 wks. £22.80#
COMPUTER SKILLS: INTERNET+ E MAIL	
Mon 20 Nov. 14.30-16.30.	3 wks. £22.80#

COMPUTER COURSES (Basic computer and internet skills are required)

PHOTOSHOP 2	
Mon 30 Oct. 9.30-11.30.	6 wks. £45.60#
MASTERING YOUR IPAD	
Tues 17 Oct. 09.30-11.30.	3 wks. £22.80#
INTRO TO MANUAL BOOK KEEPING	
Mon 16 Oct. 19.00-21.00.	8 wks. £60.80#
BUYING AND SELLING ON E-BAY	
Tues 14 Nov. 9.30-11.30.	4 wks. £30.40#

HANDICRAFTS

SEWING FOR PLEASURE	
Tues 31 Oct. 09.30-11.30.	6 wks. £41.40#
PATCHWORK SUITABLE FOR ALL LEVELS	
Wed 1 Nov. 14.30-16.30.	6 wks. £41.40#
UPHOLSTERY & SOFT FURNISHINGS	
Wed 1 Nov. 12.00-14.00.	6wks. £41.40#
SEWING MADE SIMPLE SUITABLE FOR ALL LEVELS	
Thurs 2 Nov. 18.00-20.00.	6 wks. £41.40#

MUSIC

PLAY THE GUITAR FOR CHILDREN (8YRS+)	
Beginners: Mon 30 Oct 16.45-17.45	6 wks. ***
Improvers: Mon 30 Oct 17.45-18.45	6 wks. ***
Intermediates: Thurs 2 Nov. 17.45-18.45	6 wks. ***

*** Please contact Student Services for prices

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Improvers: Wed 1 Nov. 18.30-19.30.	7 wks. £26.60
Improvers: Thurs 2 Nov. 19.05-20.05.	7 wks. £26.60
Improvers: Thurs 2 Nov. 20.10-21.10.	7 wks. £26.60
Beginners @ The Oakfield Centre:	
Fri 03 Nov. 10.00-11.00.	7 wks. £29.40#

FITNESS YOGA

Tues 31 Oct. 20.05-21.05.	7 wks. £26.60
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ADULT SWIMMING LESSONS:

Beginners: Tues. 31 Oct. 19.00-19.45.	7 wks. £28.00#
Improvers: Mon. 30 Oct. 19.45-20.30.	7 wks. £28.00#
Advanced: Mon. 30 Oct. 20.30-21.15.	7 wks. £28.00#

DANCE FIT

Tues 31 Oct. 18.00-19.00.	6 wks. £22.80
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FAMILY LEARNING

The price includes a place for one adult (aged over 19) and a child.

TEACH YOUR CHILD TO SWIM

Children 18 mths-4yrs	
Wed 1 Nov. 09.30-10.15.	6 wks. £20.25#
Sat 4 Nov. 08.50-09.20.	6 wks. £13.50#
Sun 5 Nov. 12.45-13.30.	6 wks. £20.25#

SEW TOGETHER

Thurs 2 Nov. 16.00-17.30.	5 wks. £28.50#
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FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHY

Tues 31 Oct. 16.00-17.30.	5 wks. £28.50#
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ARTS AND CRAFTS

CREATIVE WRITING

Mon 30 Oct. 19.00-21.00.	5 wks. £38.00#
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LEARN TO SCULPT IN STONE

Tue 31 Oct. 19.00 - 21.00.	5 wks. £38.00#
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SUGARCRAFT FOR BEGINNERS

Tues 31 Oct. 19.00 - 21.00.	5 wks. £43.00#
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GET COOKING

Thurs 2 Nov. 19.00 - 21.00.	6 wks. **FREE**
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COMMUNITY SESSIONS

Weekly pay as you go sessions

ADULT SWIMMING: Mon. 12.45-13.30	£3.50
Thurs. 19.00-20.00.	£3.50
AQUAFIT: Fri. 12.15-13.00.	£3.50.
Wed. 19.00-20.00, Sun. 9.00-10.00.	£4.50
FITNESS SWIM: Mon. 18.00-18.45.	£3.00
for 10-19 yrs olds	

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Reduced Fees: Where you see this # sign the course is supported by The Skills Funding Agency. If you are in receipt of certain benefits fees are reduced to 25%. Price in brackets () includes additional costs.

Course Dates: Courses are suspended on 23rd to 29th October unless stated otherwise

This programme is subject to change: particularly if we are unable to recruit minimum class numbers. Whilst every effort is made to ensure that this programme and the pricing is accurate at the time of publication, changes and errors may occur. We reserve the right to amend details as required.

PLEASE NOTE: A 1.2% charge will be added to all credit card payments processed through Dudley MBC. Debit card payments remain unchanged.

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BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE Level 1	**NEW**
Tues 31 Oct. 18.30-21.00.	26 wks. £375.00#

(Includes examination fee)

NATIONAL POOL LIFEGUARD

Mon-Sat 23-28 Oct 08.30-17.00	£220.00
Mon-Sat 19-24 Feb 18 08.30-17.00	£220.00

(Includes course manual and assessment fee)

Please check our website for course requirements

FRIDAY WORKSHOPS

KEEP SAFE ON THE INTERNET

Fri 24 Nov. 09.30-11.30.	1 wk. £7.20#
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SATURDAY WORKSHOPS

INTRO TO BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE

Sat 14 Oct. 9.30-12.30.	1 wk. £20.55
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INTRO TO EXCEL SPREADSHEETS

Sat 25 Nov. 9.30-12.30.	1wk. £20.55
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CAKE MAKING FOR BEGINNERS

Sat 14 Oct. 9.30-12.30.	1 wk. £20.55
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SUGARCRAFT FOR BEGINNERS

Sat 18 Nov. 9.30-12.30.	1 wk. £20.55
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PHOTOGRAPHY FOR BEGINNERS

Sat 25 Nov. 9.30-12.30.	1 wk. £20.55
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EMPLOYABILITY AND INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

Sat 4 Nov. 9.30-12.30.	1 wk. £20.55
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SEW FOR CHRISTMAS

Sat 11 Nov. 9.30-12.30.	1 wk. £20.55
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INTENSIVE COURSES

IMPROVING YOUR OVERLOCKER SKILLS

Fri 03 Nov. 09.30-12.30.	2 wks. £22.80#
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DECORATE YOUR CHRISTMAS CAKE

Sat 25 Nov. 9.30-12.30.	2 wks. £22.80#
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FIRST AID

EMERGENCY FIRST AID

Fri 17 Nov. 9.00-16.00.	1 wk. £38.40
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PAEDIATRIC FIRST AID.

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HELLO AGAIN! NEIL CELEBRATES 50 YEARS PAGE 2

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Neil: it's not so easy to write a hit record

Ever-green singer Neil Diamond will return to Birmingham to headline the city's Arena tonight and Genting Arena on Sunday. The star is celebrating his 50th anniversary, having last played Birmingham when he headlined the Genting Arena in 2015.

Having sold more than 130 million albums worldwide, Neil has an enviable back catalogue that includes Sweet Caroline, Cracklin' Rosie, Love on the Rocks and Forever in Blue Jeans.

Neil is delighted to be back on the road after taking a couple of years out from his regular touring work.

"This is my usual schedule. Every two or three years I go out there. But the reaction to this one has been a little different. We've put 50 cities on sale and the response has been way high. It's been very heartening to me. I've been doing this 50 years and to have an audience that's out there and anxious and enthusiastic is exciting."

He didn't imagine he'd have made it this far. Neil is all too aware that rock'n'roll careers seldom last into their 50th year and when he started out artists tended to just have two or three records. After that, they were bombed out by their record company and it was on to the next.

He's not the only one who's lasted the course, however. Nobody imagined The Rolling Stones would still be singing Satisfaction 50 years later.

ENDURING

But Neil was part of a generation that also included other enduring stars, such as Mick Jagger, Paul McCartney, Bob Dylan and Brian Wilson. Before them, artists didn't have long careers – with very few exceptions.

Neil has a vast catalogue of work from which to choose when he is playing live. He usually finds the opening song and if that gets him excited, the rest of the show writes itself. There are ups and downs, valleys, left turns, quiet moments and bombastic moments. "You just keep adding songs and work from the song before it. Eventually you get to a point after two hours where you think, 'OK, let's wrap it.'"

However, it's not all blockbuster tunes. Neil is keen to find space for newer cuts so that he can keep the show exciting for him and the rest of the band. He's also played songs by Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell and more.

But it's tunes like Sweet Caroline that the fans want – and it's a tune he's played more than 1,500 times live.

Neil's other ultra-popular songs are Cherry Cherry, Cracklin' Rose, I Am I Said, Brother's Love Travelling Salvation Show, Beautiful Noise, Holly Holy, Forever in Blue Jeans, America and You Don't Bring Me Flowers.

"I want to create a list of songs that I haven't done before. 'If You Go Away' is as definite candidate. 'Suzanne' is a definite candidate. I have a list, but I want to keep some of them surprises. There will be a bunch of additions to the set list. Hopefully they'll be accepted by people. If they are, we'll keep doing them."

The veteran songwriter is making the most

Forever in blue jeans – Neil's on his 50th anniversary tour



of his 50th anniversary and a career-spanning box set features 50 hand-picked songs from his career.

The star began his career as a Brill Building songwriter and wrote for Jay and the Americans,

The Monkees and other stars. He was the brains behind I'm a Believer and A Little Bit Me, a Little Bit You, among many others.

Stars flocked to play his music, with his work covered by musicians including Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, Johnny Cash and UB40, who turned his 1968 song Red Red Wine into a Number One in 1983.

While Neil has influenced many other stars, he was shaped by artists from a different era.

He loved Lonnie Donegan's Rock Island Line, The Everly Brothers' Bye Bye Love, The Rolling Stones' Satisfaction, Peter Paul and Mary's Blowin' In The Wind and Ritchie Valens' La Bamba.

During those early years, Neil had no real thought of becoming a singer. He wanted to go to medical school to become a scientist. However, he decided he wasn't smart enough

I've been doing it a long time now. I can't find another way to make a living

for that and instead he dropped out of New York University after his junior year to take a job on Tin Pan Alley. He was paid \$50 a week and it took eight years to write his first hit, Solitary Man, in 1966.

Despite his brilliance, he's never found it particularly easy to write a hit. He told an interviewer recently: "You would think that after all these years of writing I would have learnt to do it quickly and gracefully and easily, but it doesn't seem to work out that way."

"Every song is different, so it doesn't help me very much to have had years of experience. It's hard work, and it's not getting any easier."

"But all right, nobody told me it was gonna be easy. And so what? I'm a ditch-digger when I'm writing songs. My back hurts? Who cares? I gotta get that ditch dug deep and strong and it's gotta serve its purpose. There are no short cuts. There are only long cuts. That's what it is. But I've been doing it a long time now. I can't find another way to make a living."

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.

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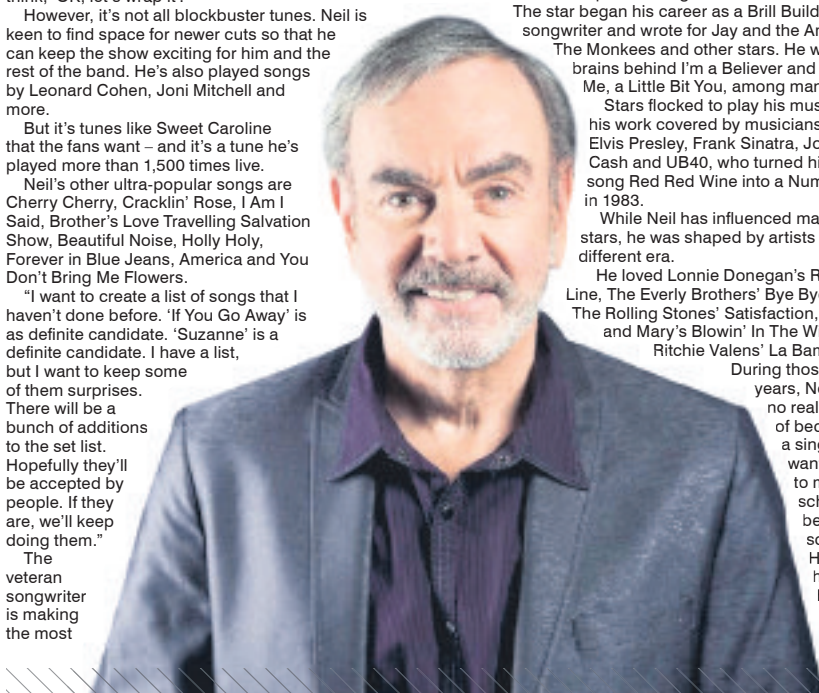
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The Vryll Society from Liverpool



Vryll have licence to thrill in psychedelic triple bill

Gig of the week is a rare foray into the West Midlands for Liverpool's fast rising psychedelic rockers The Vryll Society.

The band who shared bills with Blossoms, The Coral and The Kooks recently released a single, Shadow Of A Wave, and the swaggering indie pop quintet have picked up a big following on Merseyside. They will be headlining a formidable triple bill at Wolverhampton's Newhampton Arts Centre next Thursday (October 19) warming up for the Ritual Union festival on Oxford's Cowley Road the following Saturday.

Also at this feast of psychedelia near Molineux will be Sweden's Josefin Öhrn + The Liberation and Sheffield heavy psych outfit Baba Naga.

Little Mix will be giving a shout out to their exes

at the Genting Arena tomorrow (Friday) before returning in November. That night rock fans may prefer Birmingham's Broken Witt Rebels at the Slade Rooms in Wolverhampton or 68 Guns outfit The Alarm at Birmingham O2 Academy. Young Pilgrims bring their brassy grooves to Wolverhampton's Arena Theatre on Saturday but it will be Brass In Pocket at the Symphony Hall on Sunday when Chrissie Hynde brings The Pretenders. Or end the weekend at Bilston for some Hocus Pocus with Dutch rockers Focus at the Robin 2.

Major gigs at the Symphony Hall include soul singer Michael Kiwanuka (Monday), Soft Cell's Marc Almond (Tuesday) and folk/rockers The Waterboys (next Thursday).

Bedlam looks at healing through arts



The healing power of art comes under the spotlight in Bedlam, Birmingham's third arts and mental health festival, which starts on Tuesday.

Shaped by people who have experienced mental ill health, the festival celebrates arts and wellbeing and is being held at venues across the city, chiefly Birmingham Repertory Theatre and the Mac in Cannon Hill Park.

The three-week festival features performance poet, Lemn Sissay, pictured, performing his one-man play Something Dark (October

24, Mac); poetry and dance event Kahaani (Oct 27, Mac); Birmingham actress Olivia Winteringham looks at love and grief and how the state of our minds can affect how we remember in Delightful (Oct 26-28, Birmingham Rep).

Charming family show The Girl and the Giraffe (Oct 24-26, Mac) uses puppetry to explore wellbeing and friendship from a child's perspective in matinee performances. A Wellbeing Discovery Day (Oct 22, Rep) will offer yoga, meditation, tai chi and a range of mindfulness activities for all ages.

Festival organiser Steve Ball, an

associate director at The Rep, said: "Evidence shows that the arts can have a positive impact on wellbeing yet there have been too few opportunities for people affected by mental ill health to engage with the arts. We hope that this festival will change that."

"Our inaugural festival in 2013 attracted 1,650 participants and audience members and increased to 2,408 in 2015. With the addition of new partners and venues the 2017 festival promises to be bigger than ever." Visit www.birmingham-rep.co.uk website.

Halloween comes early to the Grand

Get into the Halloween spirit early when mirth and the macabre merge in The Addams Family musical, staged at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday (October 17-21).

Rising star of stage Carrie Hope Fletcher, pictured, who is also massively popular on social media, will take on the iconic role of Wednesday Addams with Samantha Womack as her vampish mother Morticia and Les Dennis as ghoulish Uncle Fester.



Dance star Carlos brings Cuba's best

Dance superstar Carlos Acosta will make a guest appearance with his Acosta Danza troupe at Birmingham Hippodrome. The Havana-based company features dancers from Cuba gathered by the former Royal Ballet star to perform works by choreographers from Acosta's homeland, plus leading American and European dance creators. Debut is staged from Wednesday to Saturday (October 18-21). Contact Dance Company have been working with Wolverhampton's Mosaic Disability Theatre on dance duets being performed tomorrow (Friday), matinee and evening performances, in Two Fold at Wolverhampton's Arena Theatre. Lucy Suggate brings physical expression to the electronic music of James Holden in Pilgrim at the Hippodrome's Patrick Centre venue on October 20.

FESTIVE Season

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- Christmas Holidays - Hilton Hotels
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CHOICE



Lucy Worsley

Lucy Worsley's Nights at the Opera (BBC2, 9pm)
Part one of two. The history of some of the world's greatest operas, and how they reflect the hopes and fears of the cultures they were written in. The first episode focuses on four operas written in Europe between the 17th and 19th centuries – Monteverdi's The Coronation of Poppea, Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro, Beethoven's Fidelio and Verdi's Nabucco – and explores the political backdrop of the time.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live.** **11.30 The Haiky Bikers' Comfort Food.** (R) **12.00 Football Focus.** **1.00 BBC News.** Weather. **1.15 Bargain Hunt.** (R) **2.15 Money for Nothing.** (R) **2.45 Film:** Gnomeo & Juliet. (2011) Animated comedy, with the voices of James McAvoy and Emily Blunt. **4.00 Final Score.** **5.10 Escape to the Country.** (R) **5.40 BBC News.** **5.50 Regional Programme.**
6.00 Pointless Celebrities. Alexander Armstrong and Richard Osman present a family-themed of the general knowledge quiz, featuring Robert Lindsay, Merrill and Jay Osmond, Richard Herring and Richard Blackwood.
6.45 Strictly Come Dancing. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkelman host as the 13 remaining couples once again take to the stage to demonstrate whether another week of training has paid off. As ever, head judge Shirley Ballas and her fellow panellists Darcey Bussell, Bruno Tonioli and Craig Revel Horwood are on hand to deliver their expert opinions on the stars' performances. At the end of the show, voting lines are opened for members of the public to have their say on the evening's routines, with the results being combined with the judges' scores in the next edition to determine which competitors will be going head-to-head in the dance-off.
8.40 Casualty. Ethan learns the truth about Connie's illness, and she blackmails him into performing an urgent surgical procedure on her. Meanwhile, Alicia panics ahead of her driving test.
9.30 Mrs Brown's Boys. Agnes is excited about Rory and Dino's big day, until she meets their flamboyant wedding planner, while Father Damien raises concerns about the ceremony. (R)
10.00 BBC News: Weather; National Lottery Update.
10.20 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Liverpool v Manchester United at Anfield and Crystal Palace v Chelsea at Selhurst Park.
11.45 The NFL Show. Mark Chapman looks at the major stories shaping the NFL world.
12.15 Film: Reasonable Doubt. (2014) **1.35 Weather for the Week Ahead.** **1.40 BBC News.**

BBC2

6.15 How We Won the War. (R) **6.45 Animal Park Summer Special.** (R) **7.30 Naomi's Nightmares of Nature.** (R) **8.00 Deadly 60.** (R) **8.30 Show Me What You're Made Of.** **9.00 Saturday Mash-Up!** **11.00 Mountain Lions – Big Cats in High Places:** Natural World. (R) **12.00 Rick Stein's Long Weekends.** (R) **1.00 Coast.** (R) **1.30 Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands.** **2.30 India: Nature's Wonderland.** (R) **3.30 Flog It!** (R) **4.30 Mastermind.** (R) **5.00 The Big Family Cooking Showdown.** (R)
6.00 Anglesey: Island Life. Two descendants of the first Marquess of Anglesey revisit their childhood home, while the head of the Anglesey Druid Order celebrates summer solstice.
6.30 Gardeners' World. Monty Don adds gooseberries to his fruit garden, divides and moves herbaceous perennials and advises on the best bulbs to plant for cut flowers next year. (R)
7.30 Front Row. Giles Coren and his guests discuss some of this week's cultural highlights, and Samira Ahmed interviews Kate Winslet about romance-disaster film The Mountain Between Us.
8.00 Britain Afloat. Mary-Ann Ochota's boating documentary continues as she turns attention to narrow boats, which helped power Britain's industrial revolution, and shaped the lives of canal workers.
8.30 Dad's Army. Sergeant Wilson is appointed manager of the Eastgate branch of the bank. Comedy, starring John Le Mesurier. (R)
9.00 Lucy Worsley's Nights at the Opera. Part one of two. The history of some of the world's greatest operas, beginning with the political climate behind famous works by Monteverdi, Mozart, Beethoven and Verdi.
10.00 Live at the Apollo. With Joe Lycett and Phil Wang. (R)
10.30 Later – with Joels Holland. With Robert Plant, St Vincent, Nick Mulvey, Kelela and John Moreland.
11.35 Film: The British Guide to Showing Off. (2011) Part-animated documentary about Andrew Logan's Alternative Miss World show, celebrating some of the most memorable contestants featured over the 40 years of the event.
1.05 Film: The Hunters. (1996) **3.00 This Is BBC Two.**

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10 Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids.** (R) **6.20 Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids.** (R) **6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures.** (R) **6.55 Super 4.** (R) **7.00 Mission: Impossible.** (R) **7.05 Oddbods.** (R) **7.10 Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors.** **7.30 Scrambled!** Scrambled! **7.35 Scrambled!** The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50 Scrambled!** Fangbone. (R) **8.10 Scrambled!** The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.30 Scrambled!** Thunderbirds Are Go. **8.55 Scrambled!** Adventure Time. **9.25 ITV News.** **9.30 Saturday Morning** with James Martin. **11.25 Gino's Italian Escape – Islands in the Sun.** (R) **11.55 ITV News;** Weather. **12.00 The X Factor:** Six Chair Challenge. (R) **1.30 ITV Racing:** Live from Newmarket. Coverage of today's race meetings at Newmarket and York. **4.15 Thunderbirds Are Go.** (R) **4.45 Little Big Shots.** (R) **5.45 Regional Programme;** Weather. **5.55 ITV News;** Weather.
6.15 Cannonball. Andrew Flintoff hosts the action-packed game show, in which contestants tackle a series of water-based, obstacle course challenges in the hope of claiming the Cannonball Cup.
7.15 The Chase: Celebrity Special. New series. The star-filled version of the quiz show returns, as Christian O'Connell, Carrie Grant, Naomi Wilkinson and Dave Johns take on one of the show's resident experts.
8.15 The X Factor: Six Chair Challenge. The dreaded Six Chair Challenge phase of the contest reaches its midway point, as the performers each take to the stage individually, in a bid to win one of the six seats on the stage – and at place in the Judges' Houses round. However, even those performers who manage to claim a chair are not safe, as judges Simon Cowell, Louis Walsh, Sharon Osbourne and Nicole Scherzinger all retain the right to evict previously selected contestants in favour of acts that follow, and host Dermot O'Leary is on hand to console those unfortunate performers who find themselves giving up their place to another contestant.
10.15 The Jonathan Ross Show. The host is joined by guests Stormzy, Annette Bening and Jamie Bell.
11.20 ITV News; Weather.
11.40 Film: The Last Boy Scout. (1991) **1.30 Jackpot247.** **3.00 The Hungry Sailors.** (R) **3.50 ITV Nightscreen.**

CHANNEL 4

6.15 Marathon: Yorkshire. **7.10 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **7.35 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **8.00 Frasier.** (R) **8.25 Frasier.** (R) **8.55 Frasier.** (R) **9.30 The Big Bang Theory.** **9.55 The Big Bang Theory.** **10.25 The Big Bang Theory.** **10.50 The Simpsons.** (R) **11.20 The Simpsons.** (R) **11.50 Come Dine with Me.** (R) **12.25 Come Dine with Me.** (R) **12.55 Come Dine with Me.** (R) **1.25 Come Dine with Me.** (R) **1.55 Come Dine with Me.** (R) **2.30 A Place in the Sun:** Winter Sun. (R) **3.30 A Place in the Sun:** Winter Sun. (R) **4.30 Best Laid Plans.** **5.35 Location, Location, Location.** (R)
6.30 Channel 4 News.
7.00 Rivers with Jeremy Paxman. The presenter and fishing enthusiast travels along four of England's greatest rivers, exploring their history, traditions and wildlife. The first episode follows the Tweed along the English-Scottish border, where he helps to shear Cheviot sheep, tags osprey chicks, goes in search of Merlin's grave and discovers the origins of famous border ballads. (R)
8.00 Britain's Ancient Tracks with Tony Robinson. Time Team host Tony Robinson embarks on a final trek along one of Britain's ancient byways. This time, having previously travelled along a Bronze Age trackway, he turns his attention to a relatively modern route. Originally a Roman road, Dere Street stretched from York through to the Central Belt of Scotland, but its Roman name has been lost to history. Passing north through Hadrian's Wall, Tony contemplates the ancient night sky, braves the roar of a Celtic horn, and mixes medieval potions. Last in the series.
9.00 Film: Non-Stop. (2014) An air marshal on a transatlantic flight receives mysterious messages in which an anonymous terrorist threatens to kill one passenger every 20 minutes unless a ransom is paid. He searches the plane for the criminals responsible, but his investigation is threatened when he is framed as being the mastermind behind the plot. Action thriller, starring Liam Neeson, Julianne Moore and Lupita Nyong'o.
11.05 Film: Tower Heist. (2011) Crime comedy, starring Ben Stiller.
1.00 The Last Leg. (R) **1.55 Hollyoaks.** **4.05 Building the Dream.** (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.20 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.** (R) **10.55 The Gadget Show.** (R) **11.45 Police Interceptors.** (R) **12.40 Police Interceptors.** (R) **1.40 The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door.** (R) **2.40 The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door.** (R) **3.40 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.** (R) **4.40 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.** (R) **5.35 5 News Weekend.** **5.40 Film:** A Bridge Too Far. (1977) Fact-based Second World War drama, with Dirk Bogarde.
9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games, including Fulham v Preston North End at Craven Cottage, Leeds United v Reading at Elland Road, and Wolverhampton Wanderers v Aston Villa at Molineux.
9.45 Football on 5: Goal Rush. Colin Murray introduces all the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including Fleetwood Town v Rochdale at Highbury Stadium, and Luton Town v Stevenage at Kenilworth Road.
10.15 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit. The drama returns with a case about a youngster who appears to have been abducted, a fate that befell her adoptive parents' biological daughter 10 years previously. (R)
11.10 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit. Benson and Stabler are called to the hospital after the reported rape of a 10-year-old girl, and a media frenzy is sparked when another victim comes forward. (R)
12.05 SuperCasino. Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. **3.10 The EastEnders Murderers: True Crime, Real Tragedy.** A documentary exploring the stories behind the deaths of Gemma McCluskie and Sian Blake, who were both stars of one of Britain's best-loved soaps, EastEnders. (R) **4.00 Gypsy Kids: Our Secret World.** Nine-year-old Jack Joe decides he is old enough to move into his own trailer. Francie, Johnny and Margaret attend the funeral of their grandfather Simey Doherty. Last in the series. (R) **4.50 Divine Designs.** St Sophia's Greek Orthodox Cathedral, London. (R) **5.20 Wildlife SOS.** The work of an animal sanctuary. (R) **5.45 Chinese Food in Minutes.** Two estate agents learn how to make classic oriental dishes. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 The Incredible Human Journey **8.00 Wild China** **9.00 Beck: Buried Alive** **10.25 Beck: Room 302** **11.55 Top of the Pops: 1984** **12.35 Bill Lewis: TOTP 1964 to 1975** **2.00 Wild China** **3.00 Close**
ITV2
12.20 Take Me Out **1.35 You've Been Framed!** **Top 100 Kids** **2.35 The X Factor: Six Chair Challenge** **4.05 Film:** Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **5.05 FYI Daily** **5.10 Film:** Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **5.45 Film:** Liar Liar (1997) **6.45 FYI Daily** **6.50 Film:** Liar Liar (1997) **7.30 Film:** The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (2014) **8.30 FYI Daily** **8.35 Film:** The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (2014) **10.15 Celebrity Juice** **11.05 Family Guy** **12.25 American Dad!** **12.55 Timewasters** **1.55 Bromans** **2.50 Timewasters** **5.50 ITV2 Nightscreen**
ITV3
12.00 Lewis **2.00 Rosemary & Thyme** **3.00 Foyle's War** **7.00 Midsomer Murders** **11.00 Lewis** **1.05 On the Buses** **2.00 ITV3 Nightscreen** **2.30 Teleshopping**
ITV4
1.05 Storage Wars **2.05 Film:** The Way West (1967) **3.05 FYI Daily** **3.10 Film:** The Way West (1967) **4.30 Film:** Jeremiah Johnson (1972) **5.30 FYI Daily** **5.35 Film:** Jeremiah Johnson (1972) **6.50 Hornblower** **9.00 Film:** Pale Rider (1985) **10.00 FYI Daily** **10.05 Film:** Pale Rider (1985) **11.20 Film:** Se7en (1995) **12.20 FYI Daily** **12.25 Film:** Se7en (1995) **2.00 The Classic Car Show** **2.50 ITV4 Nightscreen** **3.00 Teleshopping**
E4
11.30 The Goldbergs **2.00 The Big Bang Theory** **3.00 Don't Tell the Bride** **4.00 The Great British Bake Off** **5.15 The Great British Bake Off: An Extra Slice** **6.00 The Big Bang Theory** **9.00 Film:** The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 2 (2012) **11.20 Googlebox** **1.30 The Interwebners** **2.35 Rude Tube** **3.25 Googlebox** **4.20 How I Met Your Mother** **5.05 Rude(ish) Tube**
Film4
11.00 Sunshine on Leith (2013) **1.00 Stuart Little 2** (2002) **2.30 Titanic** (1997) **6.15 The Hunger Games** (2012) **9.00 Wild** (2014) A woman attempts to turn her life around by embarking on an epic, solo trek along America's Pacific Crest Trail. Drama based on a true story, starring Reese Witherspoon. **11.20 Everly** (2014) **1.10 Blue Ruin** (2014) **3.05 Close**

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CHOICE



Jenna Coleman

Victoria (ITV, 9pm)

Albert resents Lehen's influence over the queen, and fears she is putting the health of their children at risk. The prince also unwittingly creates problems for Peel, who is facing the most important battle of his political career as he takes a stand against the corn laws. However, the embattled prime minister discovers that Albert has played into their enemies' hands. The growing tension creates a rift between the royal couple, but when tragedy strikes, personal and political sacrifices must be made. Last in the series.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **2.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **3.00** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.00** Points of View. **4.15** Songs of Praise. **4.50** Eat Well for Less? (R) **5.50** BBC News.

6.05 Regional Programme.

6.15 **Countryfile.** Ellie Harrison visits Wakehurst Place in Sussex that was devastated in the 1987 hurricane, and discovers how the estate was repaired and its trees replanted, becoming a showcase for global conservation. She also presents reports from the Countryfile archives on places that have needed to be rebuilt due to destructive weather.

7.15 Strictly Come Dancing: The Results.

The results of the public vote are combined with the judges' scores to determine which pro-celebrity duos will be competing in the dance-off. Featuring music from Gregory Porter.

8.00 **Antiques Roadshow.** Fiona Bruce presents a second episode from Nymans gardens near Crawley. The experts examine items including a jeweled locket that was a gift from Queen Victoria, an ash tray that was designed by Picasso, a collection of nearly 1000 keys, and a box of silver gambling tokens used for making debt demands.

9.00 **The Last Post.** Joe is sent to recover incriminating photographs taken by Martha, but finds himself dangerously attracted to her. Ed tries to reconnect with Alison after the recent tragedy.

10.00 BBC News.**10.20 Regional Programme.**

10.30 **Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action, featuring Brighton & Hove Albion v Everton at the AMEX Stadium and Southampton v Newcastle United at St Mary's Stadium.

11.30 **Film: Possession.** (2002) Two rival academics become attracted to each other while investigating two Victorian poets they believe were having an affair. Drama, starring Gwyneth Paltrow.

1.05 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.10** BBC News.

BBC2

7.05 Gardeners' World. (R) **8.05** The Beechgrove Garden. **8.35** Countryfile. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Mary Berry's Foolproof Cooking. (R) **11.30** My Life on a Plate. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** **Film:** The World's Fastest Indian. (2005) Fact-based drama, starring Anthony Hopkins. **3.00** Northern Italy Unpacked. (R) **4.00** Coast. (R) **5.00** Flog It! (R)

6.00 **Top Gear.** Chris Harris and Matt LeBlanc compete in a race across the Arabian peninsula, pitting a Bugatti Chiron against an assortment of other ways of travelling – with money no object. Rory Reid creates a life-size arcade game to put city cars to the test, and Timie Tempah takes a ride on the Top Gear track in a Toyota GT86. (R)

7.00 **Russia with Simon Reeve.** The adventurer embarks on a journey across the world's biggest country, taking him from the snow-capped volcanoes of the far east, through some of the remotest parts of the planet, to the great cities of the west, Moscow and St Petersburg. (R)

8.00 **Dragons' Den.** Entrepreneurs pitch money-making ideas for a home sensor system for the elderly, protein shake bottles and gluten-free cakes to the panel. Presented by Evan Davis.

9.00 **Louis Theroux: Dark States – Trafficking Sex.** Louis explores the sex trade in Houston, examining how the city has become a major centre for people trafficking and uncovering the complex dynamic between prostitutes and pimps.

10.00 **Snowfall.** Franklin finds success go to his head, but faces some hard lessons. Teddy insists on meeting his supplier, and Oso makes demands of Pedro and Lucia after a job goes wrong.

10.50 **Mock the Week.** James Acaster, Tom Allen, Ed Byrne, Rhys James and Ellie Taylor join host Dara O Briain and regular Hugh Dennis for the topical comedy show. (R)

11.20 **Film: Leave to Remain.** (2013) An Afghan teenager living in Britain faces a dilemma as the decision over whether he can claim refugee status approaches. Drama, starring Noor Dosellam.

12.45 Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **1.45** Holby City. (R) **2.45** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITY: Sooty. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Mission Emplayable. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled! Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled! The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled! Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.10** Scrambled! Ben 10. (R) **8.30** Scrambled! Be Cool, Scooby-Doo! (R) **8.05** Scrambled! Adventure Time. **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Australian Wilderness with Ray Mears. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **10.55** Amazing Animal Births. (R) **11.55** Bigheads. (R) **12.55** ITV News: Weather.

1.00 The X Factor: Six Chair Challenge. (R) **3.00** **Film:** Black Beauty. (1994) Family drama, starring Sean Bean. **4.40** Victoria. (R) **5.40** Regional Programme: Weather. **5.50** ITV News: Weather.

6.00 **Tippling Point: Lucky Stars.** Ben Shepherd presents a celebrity edition of the quiz, in which contestants Rita Simons, Mark Benton and Oli Mabuse answer questions to win turns on an arcade-style machine.

7.00 **The X Factor: Six Chair Challenge.** Dermot O'Leary hosts the conclusion of the Six Chair Challenge stage. Each of the judges must make their final decisions about which of the contestants will win one of the coveted seats and make it through to the next stage – but they are still free to change their mind right up until the last moment.

9.00 **Victoria.** Albert resents Lehen's influence over the queen, and unwittingly makes life difficult for Peel, who is facing the most important battle of his political career. Last in the series.

10.05 **ITV News: Weather.**

10.20 **Peston on Sunday.** Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston and Allegra Stratton, featuring reports on the latest issues and interviews with topical guests. (R)

11.20 **Liar.** Laura enlists Tom's help in her plan to bring Andrew to justice, but when a deception in her personal life comes to light she resorts to dangerous methods to force a confession. (R)

12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.20 Kevin Can Wait. **6.45** Kevin Can Wait. **7.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Jamie's Quick & Easy Food. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.30** **Film:** Antz. (1998) Animated comedy, with the voice of Woody Allen. **4.10** The Crystal Maze: Celebrity Specials. (R) **5.15** The Great British Bake Off. (R)

6.30 **Channel 4 News.**

7.00 **Secrets of China's Forbidden City.** Documentary exploring the Beijing palace that housed Chinese emperors for 600 years. The programme reveals the current conservation work being carried out and uncovers new details about past rulers, including trade with Europe and how a marble staircase was transported along an ice road. A scale model is used to demonstrate how the structure was built to withstand earthquakes. (R)

8.00 **Escape.** Five engineers must build an escape boat from wreckage from a number of vehicles left drifting in crocodile-infested waters following a flash flood. With Ant Middleton.

9.00 **Electric Dreams: Real Life.** A detective pursuing a killer and a games designer both seek solace from the challenges of their life by using a virtual reality device. Each uses the machine to imagine themselves in the other's world, but end up losing sight of what is real and what is an illusion. Anna Paquin and Terrence Howard star in an episode written by Outlander and Battlestar Galactica producer Ronald D Moore.

10.05 **8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown.** Jimmy Carr hosts as Jon Richardson and Sara Pascoe take on Sean Lock and Vic Reeves. David O'Doherty joins Susie Dent in Dictionary Corner. (R)

11.00 **Film: The Impossible.** (2012) A family spending Christmas in Thailand are separated in the 2004 tsunami and struggle to find each other in the ensuing chaos. Drama, starring Naomi Watts.

1.05 The Secret Life of the Zoo. (R) **2.00** Britain's Ancient Parks with Tony Robinson. (R) **2.55** Grand Designs Australia. (R) **3.50** Building the Dream. (R) **4.45** Gillette World Sport.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! Poppy Cat. **6.10** Little Princess. (R) **6.25** Mr Men. (R) **6.35** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.40** Milkshake! Bopping About. (R) **6.45** Simon. (R) **6.50** Pappa Pig. (R) **6.55** Wissper. (R) **7.05** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.15** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.25** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.40** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.50** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.05** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.35** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.50** Flogals. (R) **9.05** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.20** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.35** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.10** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.45** **Film:** Fetch Limits. (1989) **1.35** **Film:** The 'Bubs. (1989) **3.25** **Film:** National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1. (1993) **4.25** 5 News Update. **4.30** **Film:** National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1. (1993) **5.15** **Film:** Get Smart. (2008)

6.15 5 News Update.

6.20 **Film:** Get Smart. (2008) A clumsy office worker at a secret intelligence agency is sent into action against a sinister terrorist organisation. Spy comedy, starring Steve Carell and Anne Hathaway. Edited for language and violence.

7.20 **Film: Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls.** (1995) The eccentric pet detective is coaxed out of exile in a Buddhist monastery to search for a missing sacred bat in the African jungle. Comedy sequel, with Jim Carrey and Simon Callow. Edited for language and sexual content.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 **Film: We're the Millers.** (2013) Premiere. A drug dealer recruits a fake family to give him a cover for moving a shipment of marijuana over the Mexican border. Comedy, with Jason Sudeikis and Jennifer Aniston.

10.00 5 News Update.

10.05 **Film: We're the Millers.** (2013) A drug dealer recruits a fake family to give him a cover for moving a shipment of marijuana over the Mexican border. Comedy, with Jason Sudeikis and Jennifer Aniston.

11.25 **Film: Grown Ups.** (2010) Five friends attend the funeral of their high-school basketball coach, and decide to relive their childhood over a weekend at a lake house. Comedy, with Adam Sandler.

1.15 SportsCasino. **3.10** Paddington Station 24/7. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 Only Connect **7.30** University Challenge **8.00** The French Revolution: Tearing Up History **9.00** Jonas Kaufmann: Tenor for the Ages **10.30** Kaufmann's Oello at the Royal Opera House **12.00** Dancing Cheek to Cheek: An Intimate History of Dance **2.00** The Story of Scottish Art **3.00** Close

ITV2

11.45 Funniest Ever You've Been Framed! **12.45** **Film:** What a Girl Wants (2003) **1.50** **Film:** What a Girl Wants (2003) **2.55** **Film:** Yogi Bear (2010) **3.55** **Film:** Despicable Me 2 (2013) **5.30** **Film:** Despicable Me 2 (2013) **6.35** **Film:** The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring (2001) **7.35** **Film:** The Fellowship of the Ring (2001) **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **1.00** The Cleveland Show

ITV3

12.45 **Film:** The Pure Hell of St Trinian's (1960) **1.45** **Film:** The Pure Hell of St Trinian's (1960) **2.50** **Film:** The Nun's Story (1959) **4.10** **Film:** The Nun's Story (1959) **4.15** **Film:** The Nun's Story (1959) **5.50** Wycliffe **7.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **9.00** Sunday Night at the Palladium **10.00** Honest **11.00** Hilda Ogden's Last Ta-ra – A Tribute to Jean Alexander **12.05** Joanna Lumley: The Search for Noah's Ark **1.35** The Knock

ITV4

1.50 **Film:** Lonely Are the Brave (1962) **2.55** **Film:** Lonely Are the Brave (1962) **4.00** **Film:** Rio Bravo (1959) **5.05** **Film:** Rio Bravo (1959) **6.55** Pre-Historic River Monsters **8.00** River Monsters **9.00** **Film:** Conan the Destroyer (1984) **10.00** **Film:** Conan the Destroyer (1984) **11.05** Car Crash Global **12.10** **Film:** Barb Wire (1996) **1.10** **Film:** Barb Wire (1996) **2.05** The Avengers **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

11.00 Made in Chelsea **12.00** Don't Tell the Bride **1.00** My Hotter Half **2.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** **Film:** Ice Age: Continental Drift (2012) **9.40** The Inbetweeners **10.55** Naked Attraction **11.55** Tattoo Fixers **1.00** Rude Tube **2.30** Don't Tell the Bride **3.25** Holyoaks

Film4

1.00 Napoleon Dynamite (2004) **2.50** Carry On Cleo (1964) **4.40** Ghostbusters II (1989) **6.45** The Devil Wears Prada (2006) **9.00** The Maze Runner (2014) **11.15** Cuban Fury (2014) **1.10** Surviving Life (2010) **3.25** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

Resident Evil: Retribution, Channel 5, 11.05pm
Zombie fighter Alice finds herself trapped in a top-secret underground base as a virus sweeps the world, turning the human race into the undead. She battles through the complex in search of those responsible for the outbreak and faces an old friend, now under the control of her enemies. Sci-fi thriller sequel, starring Milla Jovovich, Sienna Guillory and Michelle Rodriguez. (2012)

TUESDAY

Damaged, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A high-school teacher's life is turned upside down when a new student moves into the area and they develop a mutual attraction for each other, leading to a string of undesirable events. Thriller, starring Chris Klein, Merritt Patterson and Tasya Teles. (2014)

WEDNESDAY

Lifetime of Lies, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Returning home for her brother's funeral, Sayre Hoyle attempts to unravel the truth about his death. While she is in the neighbourhood, she must also deal with her strained relationship with her corrupt businessman father and the romantic attentions of his lawyer. Mystery, starring Shenae Grimes-Beech, Sean Faris and John Schneider. (2016)



Instinct, Friday, Channel 4, 12.10am

THURSDAY

Fatal Friends, Channel 5, 3.10pm
Quiet teenage musician Ashley is delighted when she befriends new student Michelle, until the girl shows worrying signs of being possessive. When a strange series of events threatens to disrupt Ashley's family, school life and a budding relationship, she realises she has to put a stop to Michelle's destructive behaviour. Thriller, starring Kristen Prout. (2015)

FRIDAY

Instinct, Channel 4, 12.10am
A prison psychologist probes the mind of a maximum-security inmate, an expert on primate behaviour, to find out what made the zoologist go berserk and murder two park rangers in Rwanda. Drama, inspired by Daniel Quinn's novel Ishmael, starring Anthony Hopkins and Cuba Gooding Jr. (1999)

Going behind the scenes of a memorable occasion

It was one of the biggest boxing bouts in recent history – a clash of generations between an upcoming young talent and one of the sport's greatest-ever champions.

Back in April, Anthony Joshua fought Wladimir Klitschko for the IBF, WBA and IBO heavyweight titles in front of 90,000 fans at Wembley Stadium.

It was the largest-ever attendance for a boxing bout on British soil and the most spectators for a heavyweight fight anywhere in the world since The Long Count Fight between Gene Tunney and Jack Dempsey in Chicago in 1927.

For once, the much-hyped event wasn't an anti-climax. After a close and cautious first four rounds, 'AJ' came out and battered 'Dr Steelhammer' to the canvas in the fifth.

However, the 41-year-old Ukrainian rose up and dominated his younger opponent for the remainder of the round, before battering him and scoring his own knockdown in round six.

The next few rounds were again cautious, both men wary of each other, until a reinvigorated Joshua attacked his opponent in round 11, sending him to the canvas.

Klitschko again rose up, but Joshua knocked him down for a second time in the round, before the referee stopped the fight.

This documentary follows Joshua in the final hours leading up to the historic fight.

It also provides an intimate insight into the young champion at home the night before and in his dressing room as the clock ticked down to the opening bell.

The programme also features a look at the career of the Watford fighter, who turned 28 on Sunday.

As an amateur, Joshua represented Britain at the 2012 Olympics, winning a gold medal in the super-heavyweight division.

He is also the second boxer, after Joe Frazier, to win a world heavyweight title whilst still reigning as Olympic champion at the top weight.

But before his success in the ring he had his fair share of problems.

In 2009, Joshua was put on remand in Reading Prison for what he describes as "fighting and other crazy stuff". He was made to wear an electronic tag on his ankle when released.

Then in March 2011, Joshua was pulled over by the police for speeding in Colindale, North London.

He was found with 80z of herbal cannabis hidden in a sports bag in his Mercedes and charged with possession with intent to supply a class B drug, an offence that carries a maximum 14-year sentence.

Joshua was suspended from GB boxing squad and was sentenced to a 12-month community order and 100 hours' unpaid work after pleading guilty at crown court.

As well as profiling Joshua, The Fight Of My Life also contains the boxer's own fascinating analysis on what was certainly the biggest test of his career so far and seen by many as a boxing classic.



Anthony Joshua: The Fight Of My Life, Wednesday, BBC1, 10.45pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

George Michael: Freedom Channel 4, 9pm
On Christmas day 2016, music fans around the world were shocked by the death of George Michael. From his days crafting pop classics for Wham! to his later career as respected solo singer-songwriter, he was one of the biggest names in British music. Now this documentary, which Michael finished working on less than two days before his death, explores his incredible life, focusing in particular on the period around the release of his album Listen Without Prejudice Vol. 1. As well as featuring Michael talking about love, loss and his battle with the record label, there is also previously unseen footage and interviews with some of his famous friends and fans - including a quintet of supermodels who reunite to talk about their experiences of making the iconic video for Freedom! 90.

TUESDAY

Chris Packham: Asperger's and Me BBC2, 9pm
When the naturalist was a lad, autism was a mystery to some, and completely unknown to others. It certainly wasn't something that was discussed openly, either at home or in the media.

As a result, thousands on the autistic spectrum struggled through their childhoods and teenage years, attempting to make sense of a world they saw very differently to other people. Packham was in his 40s and already a famous face before he was diagnosed as having Asperger's syndrome, which causes him to struggle in social situations and find human relationships difficult. He candidly discusses his situation in this moving documentary, which also features testimony from his long-term partner, who describes him as sometimes being 'like an alien'. Packham also learns more about treatments, and ponders whether he would ever want to be cured.

WEDNESDAY

Ugly House to Lovely House with George Clarke Channel 4, 8pm
New series. George is joined by leading architects to help transform some of Britain's most unloved houses into desirable properties. In the first episode the team meet Simon and Lisa, who recently bought a building in rural Gloucestershire in such a shoddy state that neighbours

compared it to the house in Amityville Horror. George teams the couple up with creative architect Laura Clark, who attempts to turn this terrifying building into a warm and welcoming, modern home, whilst retaining some of its original character.

THURSDAY

Gordon Ramsay on Cocaine ITV, 9pm
Britain is the biggest user of cocaine in Europe – and it's rife in the restaurant trade. Gordon Ramsay has seen the drug wreck the careers of colleagues, including a protege who lost his life to an overdose in 2003. He now presents this two-part documentary exposing the truth about the drug. He travels to South and Central America to witness the illegal process by which cocaine is made, joins British police trying to catch drivers under the influence and sees the arrest of couriers on their way to a major deal.



Gordon Ramsay on Cocaine, Thursday, ITV, 9pm

FRIDAY

Travel Man: 48 Hours in Rome Channel 4, 8.30pm
Richard Ayoade is back for a new series of trips – and he begins by joining Matt Lucas for a Roman holiday. With just 48 hours to experience the Eternal City, they begin by dropping their bags off at their ultra-hip hotel, and then head to Rome's oldest hat shop in search of headgear that will protect them from the blazing Italian sun. Then, they set about touring the city in vintage Fiat 500 cars, finishing on top of Gianicolo Hill in time for the cannon being fired as part of a daily ritual that has been taking place since the 1850s. On the second day they stray into the same territory as ITV2's Bromans as, following a guided tour of the Colosseum, they head to gladiator school to practise their sword skills.

QI BBC2, 10pm

The comedy quiz show returns, as Sandi Toksvig poses more perplexing questions to a selection of celebrity guests. As ever, the panellists will not necessarily be expected to deliver the correct answers, and Sandi will be handing out points to those who provide the 'most interesting' guesses. Challengers joining Alan Davies this week are Bill Bailey, Phill Jupitus and Claudia Winkleman.

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No.451

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.

01.	6		26		15		14		21						
24	17	4		16		19	21	15	11	16	4		1		
	3			14	23	16			17		16	11	5		
	20			24		26	14	3	19		11		21		
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12	8		14	18	4	16	5	15	16				17		
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	19				11			19			18			8	

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
D	A	X	U	G	J	K	T	I	W	O	S	C
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
E	H	P	N	B	M	Z	F	V	L	R	Y	Q

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. The Spanish manuscript may have many leaves (4)
3. Loth to tackle anything not lined out (8)
9. Coming to a similar conclusion (7)
10. This can't be right (5)
11. Cricketer's ideal, coveted by musicians (7,5)
13. Descend on fire (6)
15. Didn't deny that it's an abnormal appetite (6)
17. Long lane that does have a turning for hardware (3-6,3)
20. Wide on top? (5)
21. Try to please? (7)
22. A spot of sympathy? (4-4)
23. They carry poison as an afterthought (4)

Down

1. A pure one in the common market, perhaps (8)
2. Senior citizen (5)
4. Things look different after dark (6)
5. Key phrase? (7,5)
6. Listener's complaint (7)
7. A politician's essay about love (4)
8. She was one of his heroines (5,7)
12. Not a man responsible for arranging publication (8)
14. State encouraging one to let the matter rest (7)
16. A colourless individual (6)
18. Maintains the cargo is in them (5)
19. Abandoned port (4)

[illegible]

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Cries (4)
3. Reference (8)
9. React (7)
10. Confess (5)
11. Bad luck (12)
13. Diminish (6)
15. Tree (6)
17. Tangle (12)
20. Higher (5)
21. Injurious (7)
22. Shri11 (8)
23. Parched (4)

Down

1. Clamber (8)
2. Foundation (5)
4. Accounts book (6)
5. Beyond reach (12)
6. Wicked (7)
7. Observe (4)
8. Not easily angered (4-8)
12. Wasted away (8)
14. Plug (7)
16. Narrow band (6)
18. Deduce (5)
19. Bother (4)

3				5				1
		6	9		7			
	9			3		5	4	
2	5		3		4		1	7
7	3		8		1		6	5
	7			1		6	5	
			4		6			
1		3		9				8

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S
SOLUTIONS:

1	5	4	8	2	7
---	---	---	---	---	---

1	5	4	8	2	7	3	9
7	2	6	5	3	9	1	8
9	8	3	4	6	1	7	5
5	6	8	7	9	2	4	1
2	7	9	1	4	3	5	6
4	3	1	6	8	5	9	2
6	9	5	2	7	4	8	3
3	4	2	9	1	8	6	7
8	1	7	3	5	6	2	4

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 6 Recipes; 7 Flats; 9 Cover; 10 Galahad; 12 Investments; 14 Hermit crabs; 18 Routine; 19 Cedar; 21 Under; 22 Clergy.
Down: 1 Besom; 2 Pigskin; 3 Seal; 4 Cleave; 5 Struts; 8 Batters; 9 Pigeon; 13 Rebut; 14 Malt; 16 Break; 17 Baire; 20 Red.
QUICK - Across: 6 Balance; 7 Jolly; 9 Lucky; 10 Promise; 12 Bread-winner; 14 Come to a head; 18 Inhuman; 19 Essay; 21 Petty; 22 Cunning. Down: 1 Vague; 2 Walker; 3 Act; 4 Common; 5 Cluster; 8 Growths; 11 Samovar; 13 Counter; 15 Equity; 16 Absent; 17 Vaunt; 20 Fun.

1. Who scored the only goal in Terry Venables's first match as England manager?
2. Whose wife was Frances Nisbet?
3. What did IA Richards and CK Ogden devise?
4. What type of animal is the dik-dik?
5. What is the unit of currency of South Africa?

6. Which country was ruled by dictator Kim Il-Sung?
7. Which car firm's name means 'people's car'?
8. Which film actress achieved fame in *The Torrent* in 1926?
9. To which literary group did Virginia Woolf belong?
10. What do children get from the tree *Aesculus hippocastanum*?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Laurence Olivier; 2 Pentateuch;
3 Melina Mercouri; 4 Pointillism; 5 The Seekers;
6 Haile Selassie; 7 Johann Strauss II;
8 Democrats; 9 Tank; 10 Rip Van Winkle.

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

17789	gives a bird with webbed feet,
134592	gives a second bird with webbed feet,
96592	gives a third bird with webbed feet.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---



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It's Spain – with a capital Mmm

RAUCOUS, sometimes riotous, a tour of Madrid's tapas bars is as worthwhile as seeing powerhouse art gallery Museo del Prado and the colonnaded Plaza Mayor.

The loud-mouthed, boisterous city may not lay claim to its own dish, but you'll find restaurants, bars and delis serving some of the best regional Spanish food. Try *cecina* (cured beef) from Leon, *mojama* (salt-cured tuna) from Cadiz and sherry from Jerez.

According to a survey by Booking.com, 75 per cent of global travellers are likely to choose a location renowned for its great food and drink for their next destination. More than a third say food is what they remember most vividly about a place. For a true taste of Madrid, these are the foodie experiences you must sample.

Get your fill of history. Where: Botin
Dining in this rickety four-floor warren of a restaurant is sampling a slice of history. Founded in 1725, it's been named the world's oldest restaurant by The Guinness Book of Records. A dapper waiter slices Iberico ham in the reception, while the original wood-burning oven slow roasts about 50 piglets a day. The tender pork dish is a classic and features on a recommended three-course house menu.

Snap up some foodie bargains. Where: San Miguel and Anton Martin markets

Revamped and renovated, the covered San Miguel market, just off Plaza Mayor, is filled with deli delights. Fried calamari rings in paper cones, fresh spider crabs on ice and fried churros are all beautifully displayed. Many people come here simply to snap photos and gaze up at the curling wrought iron roof. Prices reflect the venue's popularity

Lunch like a true local. Where: Prada a Tope
Specialising in preserved figs, peppers and meats from the Bierzo region in northwest Spain, this well-

Hip to be square – Plaza Mayor in Madrid, Spain



priced, wood-panelled restaurant is a favourite with Madrilenos – especially for (late) lunch. Although not always Instagram-worthy, the generous, belly-stretching dishes are superb – particularly the salt-crusted, thin-sliced buttery steak with *zoupieros* figs and fries

Book a guided tapas crawl. Where: around the city centre

An unspoken code governs the etiquette of tapas dining in Madrid, which can be intimidating for the uninitiated. Menus (if any) will generally be Spanish chalk-scribbles on blackboards, and getting an order in

requires deft elbow manoeuvres to secure a space at the bar.

Let someone else do all the hard work by booking a food tour. Yorkshire lass Jo Wivell moved to Spain many years ago to follow her passion for flamenco, and now runs the excellent Insider's Madrid (insidersmadrid.com).

Book a bespoke tour with Jo and she'll show you all the best spots, including La Venencia, where grumpy staff serve sherry in a magical space stacked with wooden casks, and Emma Cocina (opposite the San

Eating out – inside the Botin restaurant



Miguel market), a rare place to find salads in the city.

A three-hour tour with all you can eat and drink in four stops costs from £144 per person (minimum two people). Discounts apply for bigger groups. Jo might even treat you to an impromptu dance performance!

Where to stay – Only YOU Atocha.
Charming and breezily stylish, this young, energetic hotel sums up the spirit of Madrid. The 205 rooms are compact but filled with everything the millennial traveller might need. The real star is the SEP7IMA rooftop bar.
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33
Dudley Chronicle Thursday, October 12, 2017

Detached home has excellent-sized accommodation

An outstanding detached residence, 80, Sandyfields Road, Sedgley, Dudley, has excellent-sized family accommodation throughout.

It is for sale through Skitts at £287,000.

Being an extremely well-presented and well-maintained residence, it is situated in a highly desirable residential area local to a range of amenities and a short distance to Sedgley town centre.

The stunning property has numerous noteworthy features including three double bedrooms, a 24ft living room with a sitting area off, a fitted kitchen with a dining area off, a utility, a side area, a first floor bathroom with a separate bath and a shower cubicle. There is off road parking at the front for numerous vehicles and a highly appealing garden to the rear that must be seen.

This home is approached by way of a driveway. In more detail the entrance hall has laminate flooring, a storage cupboard and stairs off.

The living room has a feature fireplace with an open fire, a window to the front and an archway to a sitting area which features French doors.

The side area – previously having been the garage – has laminate flooring and doors leading out.

Having laminate worktops, the kitchen has an integrated refrigerator, freezer and dishwasher, a range of fitted wall cupboards, ceramic wall tiles, flush ceiling spot lights, laminate flooring and a door leading out.

The dining area has laminate flooring and an archway to the kitchen. The utility room has plumbing for a washing machine and a pantry.

Upstairs, the landing has an airing cupboard and a WC off. As mentioned, all three bedrooms are double in size. The bathroom has a white suite briefly comprising of a bath tub with a shower fitting, a shower cubicle with a shower fitting, pedestal wash hand basin, ceramic wall and floor tiling and a chrome heated towel rail.

The rear garden is enclosed and private from neighbouring properties. It features a paved patio area, a neat lawn area and numerous flowers and flowering shrubs.

SEDGLEY £287,000



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24ft living room



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Five-bed home new to the market

WEDNESFIELD
£350,000

New to the property market, this five-bedroomed detached house in Barbel Drive, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, is a highly deceptively spacious property.

It is for sale through Connells at £350,000 with no chain.

Internally it has an entrance hall, downstairs cloakroom/WC, lounge, dining room, study/play room, kitchen diner and utility room.

To the first floor there are five bedrooms, a master en suite and a family bathroom.

Outside is off road parking to the front, a double garage and a generous panel enclosed rear garden.

Contact Connells on 01902 710 170.



Apartment's location convenient for amenities

BRIERLEY HILL
£79,950

<<<

Flat 5, 70 High Street, Brierley Hill, Dudley is a first floor apartment situated in the centre of Pensnett, being convenient for shops, services and commuter links.

It is for sale through DB Roberts & Partners at £79,950.

The property is well presented and has spacious living accommodation that briefly comprises an entrance hall, a living room, a fitted kitchen, two bedrooms and a family bathroom.

Outside there are communal gardens and a garage provides secure storage and parking.

Internal viewing is essential to fully appreciate.

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DUDLEY, Earls Keep , Kinloch Drive

Modern detached property located in Earls Keep in Dudley. As well as benefiting from gas central heating and double glazing, this EXTENDED family residence also boasts good-sized through-lounge-diner, conservatory, FABULOUS farmhouse style kitchen diner, attractive re-fitted guest W/C, galleried landing leading to well-appointed master bedroom with re-fitted en-suite shower room, and another THREE/FIVE bedrooms, wonderfully re-fitted family bathroom, integrated garage, large enclosed private rear garden and driveway offering ample parking to front. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: C SEDGLEY

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£269,950



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Offers in the region of **£249,995**



KINGSWINFORD, Hedgerow Drive

A SUBSTANTIALLY EXTENDED and VERY LARGE LINKED DETACHED BUNGALOW within the sought after Charterfields development, backing onto fields, offering a GENEROUS layout which includes TWO EXTENDED BEDROOMS. With LARGE BLOCK PAVED DRIVEWAY, GARAGE and a landscaped garden. EPC C

No upward chain

£245,000



WORDSLEY, Chapel Street

●●Open Viewing Sat 14th October 11am-1pm●● An OUTSTANDING TWO BEDROOM DETACHED BUNGALOW with a VERY LARGE DRIVEWAY and a beautifully landscaped private rear garden, offering an EXPENSIVELY REFITTED, and GENEROUS layout of ready to move into accommodation. EPC D

Open day

£229,950



KINGSWINFORD, Hinsford Close

A BEAUTIFULLY RE FITTED DETACHED FAMILY HOME, with a good size private garden DRIVEWAY and GARAGE, offering a SPACIOUS and EXPENSIVELY RE APPOINTED layout, which includes refitted WC, Large, Re fitted Kitchen with appliances, THREE BEDROOMS and luxury Bathroom. EPC C

£225,000



WORDSLEY, Kirkpatrick Drive

An IMMACULATE and DISTINCTIVE DETACHED FAMILY HOME with an OPEN FRONT OUTLOOK to the green opposite, offering a VERY TASTEFULLY PRESENTED and BEAUTIFULLY APPOINTED layout including THREE GOOD BEDROOMS, with ENSUITE. With DRIVEWAY, GARAGE and landscaped rear garden. EPC B

£220,000



UPPER GORNAL , Vale Street

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT! Construction has now commenced on a gas centrally heated, double glazed DETACHED BUNGALOW, short walk from major bus routes with the accommodation to include: hall, store, lounge/dining room (patio doors out to garden), kitchen (with various integrated appliances) two bedrooms (one with built in wardrobes), bathroom, garage, parking for 2 vehicles, garden. Plans available (by appointment) - at Sedgley Office. SAP: TBA

Offers in the region of **£210,000**



COSELEY, Cedar Avenue, Bramford estate

SIGNIFICANTLY EXTENDED - gas centrally heated UPVC double glazed semi-detached presented in exemplary order throughout comprising: porch, reception hall, store, 25ft through lounge/dining room, extended breakfast kitchen, rear lobby/utility room, 'office', three bedrooms (one with wardrobes), bathroom with white contemporary styled suite. Large Garage, rear garden, block paved parking to front. EPC Rating C SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of **£180,000**



KINGSWINFORD, Surrey Drive

Set back beyond the FULL WIDTH DRIVEWAY and with a private rear garden, this MOST IMPRESSIVE and DECEPTIVE MID TOWNHOUSE offers a BEAUTIFULLY PRESENTED layout including: Hall with WC off, Lounge, full width refitted dining kitchen, THREE BEDROOMS and Bathroom. EPC C

£170,000



LOWER GORNAL , Wealdstone Drive

A superbly presented intermediate property situated in the popular area of Lower Gornal. Benefiting from central heating and double glazing this family home also boasts: entrance porch, hallway, well-appointed lounge, delightful kitchen-diner, THREE BEDROOMS, stunning re-fitted bathroom, rear garden offering secure gated parking and enclosed seating/ family area, and gardens to front. VIEWING IS ESSENTIAL. EPC Rating TBC. SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of **£ 149,950**



HOLLY HALL, Hallchurch Road

This THOUGHTFULLY EXTENDED & WONDERFULLY SPACIOUS, BAY FRONTED, THREE BEDROOM, SEMI-DETACHED HOME comprises: Hall, Lounge, EXTENDED KITCHEN BEING OPEN PLAN TO DINING ROOM, Guest W.C, White Suite Bathroom, Driveway & Generous Garden. EPC:

£139,950



PENSNETT, Rookery Park

This SPACIOUS & TRADITIONAL STYLE, THREE BEDROOM SEMI-DETACHED HOME IS AVAILABLE FOR SALE WITH NO UPWARD CHAIN to comprise: Lounge, Spacious Breakfast Kitchen, Three Good First Floor Bedrooms, Bathroom, Driveway & Substantial Garden. EPC

£99,950



KINGSWINFORD, High Street

No. 1, LARCH HOUSE is a STUNNING & CONTEMPORARY STYLE, GROUND FLOOR APARTMENT comprising: Security Controlled Communal Hall, Stylish Open Plan Lounge with STUNNING KITCHEN, Two Generous Bedrooms, Contemporary Bathroom, Off Road Parking. EPC C

£97,500



SEDGLEY, Viewfield Crescent

NO UPWARD CHAIN, A superbly presented ground floor apartment located in the popular area of Sedgley, Dudley. This One bedroom property comprises of entrance hall, well-appointed living room, fitted kitchen, bathroom, parking and garage available.EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of **£74,950**



PENSNETT, High Street

This MOST APPEALING & SPACIOUS, IMMACULATE, GROUND FLOOR, APARTMENT comprises: Entrance Hall, Spacious Lounge, Modern Well Fitted Kitchen, Generous Bedroom, Well Appointed Bathroom, Resident & Visitor Parking, Pretty Communal Grounds EPC D

£64,950

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NEW

27 DUDLEY ROAD SEDGLEY
O/A £675,000

- Exceptional individual detached family home, Set within well tended walled gardens
- Spacious five bedroom accommodation over three floors
- Impressive conservatory, three reception rooms, high quality fittings throughout
- Extensive breakfast kitchen, utility room and playroom
- EPC RATING C

NO UPWARD CHAIN

23 NASH LANE, BELBROUGHTON
£199,950

- Modern two bedroom home
- Sited close to the centre of Belbroughton
- Gas central heating and double glazed
- Ideal for first time buyers or someone looking to 'downsize'
- EPC RATING D



26 OLD PARK ROAD, DUDLEY
£149,950

- Traditional style semi detached house
- Improved & extended three bedroom accommodation
- Ample off road parking & good sized easily maintainable rear garden
- Through living room with two separate living areas, extended kitchen
- EPC RATING D



27 GARRICK CLOSE O/A £125,000
EARLS KEEP DUDLEY

- Modern first floor flat
- Two bedrooms
- Communal grounds
- Two allocated parking spaces
- EPC RATING C



28 JEWS LANE, DUDLEY
£245,000

- Modern four bedroom detached house
- Well maintained & attractively presented
- Two reception rooms, utility area & re-fitted kitchen
- Ample off road parking & level easily maintained rear garden
- EPC RATING D



11E VICARAGE ROAD WEST, WOODSETTON
£179,950

- Spacious and well maintained modern detached house
- Three bedrooms with en suite shower room to bedroom one
- Dining kitchen with adjacent utility area, conservatory
- Private level rear garden & ample off road parking on driveway
- EPC RATING C



138 LANGSTONE ROAD DUDLEY
£119,950

- Two bedroom semi detached house
- Ideal opportunity for first time buyers
- Two reception rooms
- Double glazing, gas central heating & cavity wall insulation
- EPC RATING C



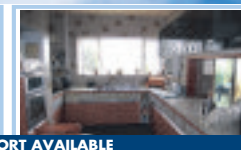
109 DUDLEY ROAD SEDGLEY
O/A £117,950

- Mid terraced house
- Three bedrooms
- Well presented & improved
- Enlarged kitchen & re-fitted bathroom
- EPC RATING E



'KURNA' HIMLEY AVENUE, DUDLEY
£235,000

- Individual detached house on a corner plot
- Well maintained, spacious three bedroom accommodation
- Two reception rooms, conservatory & downstairs w.c.
- Large and attractive rear garden with south facing views
- EPC RATING D



81 NEW STREET GORNAL WOOD
O/A £174,950

- Traditional style detached house
- Extended three bedroom accommodation
- Potential for further enhancement
- Wide road frontage with ample off road parking
- EPC RATING E



13 PARK ROAD WOODSETTON
£149,950

- Traditional semi detached house
- Well proportioned three bedroom accommodation
- Through living room & dining area
- Utility area and ground floor w.c.
- EPC RATING C



BUILDING PLOT ADJ 54 DEEPPDALE LANE GORNAL
£98,000

- Individual building plot
- Planning consent for a five bedroom detached dwelling
- Planning application number P15/1679
- Popular and established residential area
- Excellent views to the rear



83-84 CINDER BANK DUDLEY
£9,500 per annum

- Detached office building
- Flexible office accommodation
- Well maintained and carpeted
- Car parking for several vehicles
- EPC RATING D

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8 The Croft, Dudley
3 Bed Semi-Detached House
Guide: £40,000+ (plus fees)



6 Cygnet Road, West Bromwich
3 Bed Semi-Detached House
Guide: £39,000-£44,000 (plus fees)



66 Milton Street, Brierley Hill
3 Bed Semi-Detached House
Guide: £30,000+ (plus fees)



44 Park Road, Netherton
3 Bed End-Terraced House
Guide: £30,000+ (plus fees)



1 West Road, Halesowen
3 Bed End-Terraced House
Guide: £30,000+ (plus fees)



196 High Street, Pensnett
2 Bed Semi-Detached House
Guide: £40,000+ (plus fees)



11 Vicarage Road, Hockley
An end-terraced newly refurbished 6 apartment HMO
Guide: £350,000+ (plus fees)



9 Dimmocks Avenue, Bilston
3 Bed Investment Property
Current Gross Income: £7,200pa
Guide: £72,000-£74,000 (plus fees)



122 Rosefield Road, Smethwick
2 Bed Investment Property
Current Gross Income: £5,400pa
Guide: £65,000+ (plus fees)

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High Park Crescent, Sedgley **OIRO £399,950**

	2		4
	2	EPC	D

Hopyard Lane, Gornal Wood **OIEO £350,000**

	2		3
	1	EPC	E

Gospel End Street, Sedgley **£325,000**

	2		3
	2	EPC	D

Gospel End Street, Sedgley **OIRO £310,000**

	2		4
	2	EPC	D

Gate Street, Sedgley **£299,950**

	2		5
	3	EPC	D

Ruskin Avenue, The Straits **£240,000**

	1		3
	1	EPC	D

Aylesford Close, Sedgley **OIRO £215,000**

	1		3
	1	EPC	D

Highland Road, Cradley Heath **£170,000**

	2		3
	1	EPC	E

Roper Way, Woodsetton **£129,950**

	1		2
	1	EPC	D



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ESTATE AGENTS

South Oval, Upper Gornal **£130,000**

	1		3
	1	EPC	D

Goodrich Mews, Upper Gornal **£100,000**

	1		2
	1	EPC	TBC

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Brick Kiln Lane, Gornal Wood **£250,000**

	2		2
	1	EPC	D

Keats Close, The Straits **£239,950**

	1/2		1/2
	1	EPC	D

Swallowfields Road, Sedgley **£199,950**

	1		3
	1	EPC	D

School Street, Sedgley **£129,950**

	2		2
	1	EPC	E

Kinfare Rise, Upper Gornal **£72,500**

	1		2
	1	EPC	C

MOTORING

YOUR WEEKLY
GUIDE TO THE
BEST CARS ON
THE MARKET



Hyundai i30N here to shake up hot hatch market

The i30 N is the first performance model ever produced by Hyundai. It introduces the 'N' branding that's been on the South Korean car manufacturer's motorsport models for a few years now into the road car market.

It's entering the fiercely contested hot hatch segment currently dominated by the likes of the everyday-usable Volkswagen Golf GTI and Seat Leon Cupra, which it is priced to tackle head-on. There's an entry-level model as well as a Performance variant, which gets more power and extra kit – and at £27,995 looks like a potential lower-cost alternative to so-called mega hatches such as the Honda Civic Type R. Based on the i30 hatchback, the N has all the practicality of the standard car. However, under the skin the changes are wholesale – in the words of Albert Biermann, head of Hyundai's performance division, they didn't just "put a big engine in and be done with it".

The chassis has been strengthened to improve handling, there are aerodynamic devices on the exterior and beneath the car to improve downforce and cooling, and the gearbox has been overhauled to offer a

snappier response. Talking us through all the changes took nearly two hours, so we'll spare you too much detail...

In the top-spec Performance model, the 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine makes a healthy 271bhp and 353Nm of torque (which increases to 378Nm for up to eight seconds at full throttle). This puts it on a par with rivals but short of the £30,000-plus hot hatches for which 300bhp has become the norm.

Fortunately, thanks in part to that overboost system, you're never left wanting for performance. Zero to 60mph comes in 5.9 seconds and thanks to a launch control system that's totally achievable.

There are drive modes controlled via a couple of switches on the wheel. Normal and eco feel rather pointless as sport is fine for most circumstances out on the road – the crumbling tarmac on our Italian test route highlighted a stiffly sprung car that quickly settled. However, flick the switch to N and the car comes alive – throttle response is immediate and the needle charges through the tachometer at a ferocious pace. Pops and crackles from the exhaust add extra theatre here, too.

There's also a 'custom' option that lets you fine-tune various aspects of the car's set-up, but with 1,944 possible combinations it feels like unnecessary complication in a supposedly "approachable" car.

We also tested the car on track at Vallelunga near Rome and it felt in its element. The limited-slip differential put power through the front wheels with little fuss, while hard braking brought out its playful side with a wiggle from the rear. Highly impressive stuff.

Hyundai has spent a lot of research and development time on improving the aerodynamics of the i30 to give the N model more downforce. To our eyes, it reads a fine balance between giving the standard car a more purposeful appearance and going wild with spoilers and wings everywhere.

Where it could perhaps be considered left wanting is the image the badge portrays. This being Hyundai's first performance car, there's little cache in the N branding outside of hardcore motorsport fans – though if this first effort is anything to go by, that won't be true for long.

Hyundai has moved its game on dramatically

through the latest iterations of its cars, meaning its interiors aren't far behind more established European rivals. However, it's not quite there yet, with some of the switchgear feeling old school and the infotainment system – particularly the hopeless satellite navigation system – regularly frustrating.

However, N-specific extras such as the steering wheel and sports seats are welcome additions, the latter offering excellent lateral support at the hips and shoulders so you don't move about too much in hard cornering.

Whether you go for the Performance or the £24,995 entry-level model, there's a decent level of standard equipment such as an eight-inch touchscreen, LED lights all round and adaptive cruise control.

The Performance model starts from £27,995 and gets even more kit – of particular interest is the electronically controlled limited-slip differential, which helps the engine put its power through the front wheels, 19-inch alloy wheels with sticky Pirelli P-Zero tyres, and leather and suede upholstery.

As far as debuts go, the Hyundai i30 N has played a blinder.

Velar achieves five-star Euro NCAP rating



The Range Rover Velar has achieved a five-star Euro NCAP rating, confirming one of the world's most desirable luxury SUVs as among the safest too.

The fourth member of the Range Rover family scored 93 per cent for adult occupant protection, 85 per cent for child occupant protection and 74 per cent for pedestrian protection.

Velar features a comprehensive suite of safety systems, including Autonomous Emergency Braking with Pedestrian Detection. The advanced technology can detect a collision risk with cars or pedestrians in the road ahead and automatically apply the brakes. The system was awarded a maximum six marks in the Pedestrian detection tests by Euro NCAP's testers.

Jeremy Hicks, managing director, Jaguar Land Rover UK, said: "For Velar customers, only the best is good enough and we are delighted the fourth Range Rover has been awarded five-star safety credentials.

"This, combined with excellent residual values and stunning design really set Velar out as a car that appeals to the heart and the head."

By combining strong crash protection with advanced active safety systems, the Velar helps drivers to avoid accidents while providing excellent security to mitigate the effects of a collision if the worst does happen.

Range Rover Velar secured an overall Euro NCAP rating of 84 per cent and is available with an all-star cast of advanced driver assistance systems.

ALSO THIS WEEK . . .



PRACTICAL CROSSLAND X



FORD FIESTA STILL TOP OF CLASS



BOLD MOVE IN VANS BY MAN

Latest Ford Fiesta remains at the top of supermini class

By John Griffiths

For 40-odd years, Ford's Fiesta has been a family favourite, selling more than 18 million examples and regularly in the top three for British buyers.

The seventh generation Fiesta hit Britain's streets this summer and shows all the signs of continuing to be one of the most popular models around.

It has changed – or should I say evolved – retaining many of the best points from its predecessor while adding a sharper new look, a stronger, stiffer structure and a raft of the latest safety technology.

There is, as you'd expect, an impressive variety of engine sizes, trims and prices to suit all tastes, starting from £12,715 for the base 'Style' model with the 70PS 1.1 petrol. Further up the range there's the now familiar three cylinder petrol turbo, offering a much improved package of performance and economy with the option of power outputs from 70 through 125 to 140PS. The turbo diesel models for those who want ultimate economy range from 75 to 120PS.

The five-door test car had the 1.5 litre, 120PS diesel motor and came in mid-range Titanium trim. List price for this model is £18,525, but optional extras such as electric windows (for the rear as well as the front) and Ford's auto parking system pushed it up to £21,030.

This seventh generation does have a more grown-up feel, due no doubt to its stiffer construction which helps with handling, driving dynamics and safety.

The interior has a rather upmarket feel

The suspension has been tweaked, as well as slight increases in wheelbase and front track: a combination of improvements which Ford says results in more grip and shorter braking distances.

The front end, with its rather more distinctive grille and lighting cluster, puts the new Fiesta up into the top class when it comes to aerodynamics, aiding performance, economy and noise levels. And it's a sharp, positive handling car, among the best of the superminis.

The diesel engine complements this ambience: it's so quiet that few passengers will guess they're in an oil-burner even when you're accelerating hard, let alone cruising on the motorway. This is because 120PS is ample power for a car of this size, but the 270NM of torque is plenty of pulling power for making progress at low engine speeds.

The 0 to 62mph dash is a brisk nine seconds while official fuel consumption is an average of 80.7mpg. I managed 56mph over a mixture of driving conditions. The car's CO2 rating is a very low 89g/km.

Inside the new Fiesta there's a bit more room, with an improved driving position and a little more space for the longer-legged in the back. Boot space is 292 litres, rising to 1,092 litres with rear seats folded down.

The interior has quality upholstery and a subtle combination of piano black and shiny metal trim on this model, which give it a rather upmarket feel.

Perhaps the biggest change is the addition of a tablet-stytle touchscreen, controlling a range of features such as vehicle settings, audio and connectivity for iPhone and smartphones. It has reduced the number of buttons but there are still remote control buttons on the steering wheel so many operations just need a finger or thumb.

As a high specification model, the Titanium comes with projector headlamps, LED running lights, front foglamps and cornering lights, along with power adjustable and folding mirrors, cruise control, automatic temperature control and – one of my favourite gadgets – a quick clear windscreen. The Titanium also comes with stability control, traffic sign recognition, auto high beam and driver alert systems.

It's a competitive market out there, particularly among superminis, and with this improved, seventh generation Fiesta Ford is ensuring it stays at the top of the pile in the supermini class. One of the reasons it has remained, for the last four decades, such a popular model is that it has always been good to drive, and it just got better – as well as safer and more refined.



This seventh generation does have a more grown-up feel



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2017 V40 T2 R-Design Pro, Winter Pack, Bursting Blue	£7,021	£19,499
2017 V40 T2 Momentum, Osmium Grey	£6,246	£14,999
2017 V40 D2 Momentum, Denim Blue	£6,526	£16,499
2017 V40 T2 R-Design, Winter Pack, Tints, Passion Red	SOLD	,999
2017 V40 T5 R-Design Pro Auto, Winter Pack, Pan S/roof, Paddles, Harmon, + more, Bursting Blue	£8,261	£28,299
2017 V40 T2 R-Design, Winter Pack, Tints, Onyx Black	£6,871	£17,999
2017 V90 D4 Inscription Auto, Winter & Family Packs, Rear Park Assist, Tints, + more, Onyx Black	£10,181	£31,999
2017 V90 D5 AWD Inscription Auto, Winter & Family Packs, Tints, + more, Osmium Grey	£10,931	£39,499
2017 V90 D5 AWD Momentum Auto, Winter & Family Packs, Tints, + more, Mussel Blue	£10,201	£33,999
2017 V90 D5 AWD Momentum Auto, Winter & Family Pks, Tints, + more, Luminous Sand/Maroon	£10,001	£34,499
2017 V60 D4 Se Lux Nav Auto, Winter Pk, AB Lights, Htd s/wheel, Fr Park Assist, Saville Grey/Beige	SOLD	,499
2017 V60 D4 Cross Country Lux Nav Auto, Winter & Family Pks, ABL, Tints, Tempa, Osmium Grey	£10,540	£27,999
2017 V60 D4 R-Design Lux Nav Auto, Winter & Illumination Packs, Power Blue	£11,146	£27,499
2017 XC60 Se Lux Nav Auto, Winter Pack, Tempa spare, AB Lights, Driver Support, Onyx Black	£10,901	£29,499
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Bold move is attractive proposition

By John Griffiths

Car companies are constantly competing for column inches, but it's rather unusual for a new van to hit the headlines.

But then, this is something quite unusual – the first new van from a big name with a century of experience in commercial vehicles.

That experience of trucks, buses and those who operate them is one of the reasons why MAN's new TGE range of chassis cabs and panel vans could well upset the current light commercial vehicles market.

It's something of a surprise that MAN has only just produced a van, but the timing coincides with the opening of the VW Group's huge new factory in Poland, where the TGE is built alongside the familiar Crafter.

It comes with an Audi engine – a 2.0 litre turbo diesel, albeit strengthened in recognition of the fact in a commercial vehicle it will spend more time under heavier loads – with power outputs from 102 to 177bhp.

Transmission is via a six-speed manual or eight-speed auto. Most will be sold as front wheel drive, but the construction industry among others is already showing interest in the four wheel drive version which has few competitors.

Gross vehicle weights range from three to 5.5 tonnes with panel vans in three lengths (from 5,880mm to 7,391mm) and three roof heights. The chassis cabs can be fitted with tipper, crane, cherry picker, camper van – up to 15 different body styles in fact. Not forgetting a combi and crew cab, of course, with a minibus coming soon.

Even though it is MAN's first van, it has essentially hit the ground running because of its truck and bus experience, with a network of service centres, a 24/7 emergency repairs call out system, and its own financial services arm.

For fleet operators there is also the availability of one of the most advanced telematics systems for keeping track of the vehicle and its status.

But the TGE is likely to be popular with drivers, too, for

its high levels of comfort and the technology which is available.

The standard seats are comfortable, but if you're an owner/operator (or have a kind boss) you could spend another £500 and have the top of the range 'chair' with adjustable thigh support, electrically adjustable lumbar support and even a massage system.

Each seat conceals a large storage area underneath, while the centre of the three seats folds forward to create a table with cup and phone holder.

Volumes

I was also struck by its car-like driving qualities. Even when empty, the suspension isn't lumpy like many commercial vehicles and it's surprisingly quiet with no body boom or rattles which speaks volumes for its rigidity.

Maximum torque levels are high – from 300Nm which the lowest, 102bhp engine to 410Nm with the 177bhp option – and in each case the maximum is available from 1,400 to 1,500rpm. That makes for smooth progress even under load.

As well as parking sensors front and rear, you can also opt for side panel sensors, a handy feature to avoid costly damage on a large panel van. These are also an essential part of the parking assist system, which can identify and take over the steering to slot you into a parking space – I might not have attempted the space between two other vans used in Man's demonstration, which seemed unfeasibly tight.

It's also a benefit of the TGE's unique electro-mechanical steering system, which automatically lightens up for manoeuvring at low speeds.

Another option is trailer assist, which uses the parking sensors, rear camera and a computerised system on the dash's central control screen. I tried it using a small trailer which was impossible to see in the van's mirrors and managed to successfully reverse into a 'garage' of cones.

Emergency brake assist – which warns if you're getting too close to slowing traffic ahead and, if necessary,



The first new van from a big name with a century of experience in commercial vehicles

apply the brakes, along with lane assist and a rear traffic warning are also available.

Many of the optional features add cost, but could operators may consider that worth it when the cost of downtime and repairs from even minor bumps are taken into account.

Panel van load space varies from 9.9 to 18.4 cubic metres with payloads of up to 1,800kg depending on version. Towing (brake trailer weights) range from 2,500 to 3,000kg.

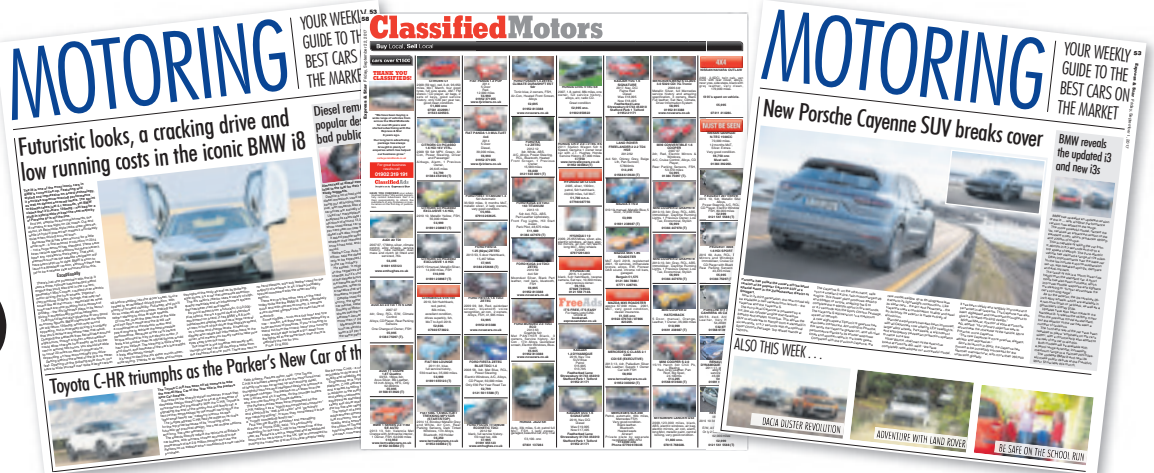
With some well-established competition (including from its own parent company VW), MAN's move into the market could be seen as a bold one. But drivers and operators will no doubt find the TGE with its range of options and established network an attractive proposition.

Plus it has the advantage of being one of the most modern commercial vehicles on the road, with a well-proven engine at its heart.

Prices for the TGE range start from £23,980.

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MOTORING

Express & Star

Crossland X fills more practical needs

By Ian Donaldson

Vauxhall is keen to tell you what its new Crossland X is not – and it's not a mildly macho four-wheel driver for people with adventurous tastes.

No, that task is filled in the range by the nearly-as-new Mokka X, a mere finger's length longer, but aimed at different buyers.

The Crossland X is as more down to earth machine (literally; it lacks the Mokka's rock defying ground clearance and 4WD availability) and is aimed at filling the more practical needs of its buyers.

And these, Vauxhall thinks, will be either younger couples who need the Crossland's space for people and their bits and bobs or older types who relish the car's raised seating and the way it makes for easier entry and exit as the joints begin to creak a little.

Family-friendly

Either group will be taking on a car that looks crisply neat outside and in and starts at a family-friendly £16,555 – although Vauxhall is following the industry trend and offers only a single colour (blue) that doesn't mean another £550 for metallic paint.

The range tops out at £21,380, heading a line up that borrows heavily from the Peugeot group for the bits you can't see, from body platform to engines and gearboxes.

That deal was struck years before the recent takeover of Vauxhall by the Peugeot empire and there's another joint venture due later this year with the larger Grandland X, which shares bits with the French firm's 3008.

It's no surprise that Vauxhall is keen to ramp up its offerings in the SUV part of the market, growing at a phenomenal pace



Your car can become a wi-fi hotspot

as buyers shun the more traditional small hatchback. They'll enjoy the sense of space in the Crossland X, with loads of headroom front and back and a rear seat (which for £300 can optionally slide forward to favour boot room) that is adult-friendly too. That means a useful increase in the already generous boot capacity, from 410 litres to 520 litres, or a van-like 1,255 litres with the rear seat folded flat.

The entry-level engine is the 1.2-litre petrol with 81bhp (54.3mpg combined; 116g/km CO₂). Elsewhere in the range, the 1.2 Turbo with petrol direct injection is available in three variants. The ECOTEC engine is equipped with the five-speed manual transmission (58.9mpg combined; 111-109 g/km CO₂) and delivers 108bhp, while the 1.2-litre combined with the six-speed automatic gearbox manages 57.3mpg combined and 123g/km CO₂.

The top-of-the-line petrol engine is the 1.2 Turbo with 128bhp (55.4mpg combined; 116g/km CO₂) and six-speed manual transmission.



There's loads of headroom front and back and a rear seat that is adult-friendly

This takes the Vauxhall Crossland X from zero to 62mph in 9.1 seconds and to a maximum speed of 128mph.

The line-up also includes two turbocharged diesel engines, including the 1.6 with 98bhp. The diesel ECOTEC variant, with Start/Stop, emits 93g/km CO₂ and achieves up to 78.5mpg combined. The most powerful diesel is the 1.6 with 118bhp (70.6mpg combined; 105g/km CO₂) and a top speed of 116mph.

Standard kit across the range includes climate control, alloy wheels, cruise control and LED daytime running lights. Depending

on grade or options, your Crossland X can park itself without the driver touching the steering wheel (which can be heated) and will beat winter frosts with a heated windscreen.

Opt for Vauxhall's OnStar system and your car becomes a wi-fi hotspot, with the chance to hook up seven mobile devices. So the kids will stay silently glued to their iPads in the back.

The way the car feels on the road depends greatly on what's under the bonnet. They all share a ride that prefers smoother roads and turns a bit sharp on bad ones and the likely

most popular, the 110 horsepower petrol lacks sparkle when provoked, although 45mpg on the test route was some compensation.

The more powerful 128bhp petrol model was very much livelier (and its six-speed gearbox sweeter) and returned an identical 45mpg. It felt a transformed vehicle.

Much more economical (58mpg on test) was the more powerful of the diesel Crosslands, which felt as swift as the better petrol and makes sense for the business user (a minority of buyers here) who won't mind the higher purchase price.

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Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km). Vauxhall range: Urban: 12.7 (22.3) – 74.3 (3.8), Extra-urban: 23.9 (11.8) – 91.1 (3.1), Combined: 18.0 (15.7) – 85.6 (3.3). CO₂ emissions: 373 – 88g/km.[#]

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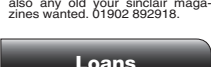
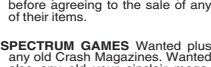
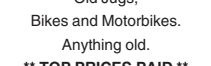
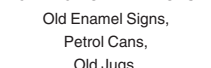
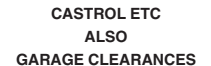
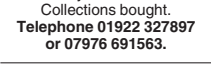
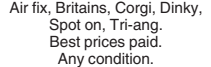
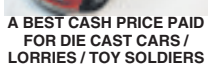
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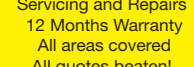
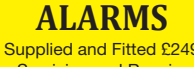
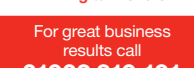
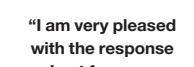
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- * Have commercial awareness
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Daley launches hunt for the next big thing

FORMER Villa, Wolves and England winger Tony Daley is hoping to help uncover the next generation of future stars – after launching his own football coaching programme.

Daley, who also played for Walsall, has joined forces with his lifelong friend Dave Barnett – who was released by Wolves as a youngster and played for Blues and Barnet among others – to set up Pro Level Performance (PLP), a 30-week programme (one day a week for two hours). Based in Aston, it will focus on the mental side of the game as much as the physical. Capped seven times by England, Dale left Wolves this summer after a decade at the club working on fitness and sport science. He said: "We have a wealth of experience to nurture the youth of today – this is a bespoke programme for aspiring young players. At my school there were five or six lads who were better footballers than me but the mental side is just as important, hence our motto 'skill is not enough'."

Visit www.prolevelperformance.co.uk for more details.

Wheels in Motion on new league deal

THE region's non-league football scene has received a significant boost thanks to a sponsorship deal from a vehicle management company.

The Midland Football League, which boasts 76 clubs across four divisions, will be branded the Total Motion Midland Football League thanks to an initial five-figure sum. The leasing company hopes to invest up to £250,000 across a five-year partnership, launched at the Banks's Stadium.

The idea, according to managing director and co-founder Simon Hill, is for clubs to profit and earn a portion of the five-figure sum stumped up yearly by Total Motion.

The incentives plan mean clubs can earn bonuses the more they utilise Total Motion's services by leasing vehicles. The company will offer £25 per vehicle rented, a figure the league will match. There is also a £1,000 end-of-season prize on offer for the club that comes out on top of a Total Motion 'league table' created by Total Motion, while a special £5,000 bonus is available for clubs that lease 250 vehicles in one financial year.

Spill puts dampener on Wigley race hopes

HEDNESFORD'S Kurt Wigley returned to the renowned fast track of Assen, in the Netherlands, for the first time in six years as the British Superbikes series moved overseas.

Taking part in the British Supersport championships, the 21-year-old admitted it took a while to get to grips with the track, hitting a damp patch and going over the handlebars during qualifying, damaging the bike as well as injuring a thumb.

The team had about three hours to rebuild the bike for the first race and had the Sorrymate.com Yamaha on the start line just in time.

Starting 10th on the grid, Wigley was up to sixth by the end of the first lap but still struggling with his injury. He suffered another crash coming out of the hairpin and high-sided.

"The rules are if you crash you're out of the race," he said. "It meant I started the next race in 15th but it was a much better race and I managed to catch the top 10, finishing in ninth."

Rugby coach tackling the scientists head-on

SPORTING FEATURE

By Mark Andrews

"The health crisis facing Britain's children is not concussion, but obesity and lack of exercise."

the position of flanker where his head is particularly vulnerable.

"I would imagine the risk of leg breaks in football is far greater," he says, although he does add that head injuries can be much more serious.

He points out that much has changed in the way rugby is taught to youngsters in recent years.

"You now have age range rugby, where different rules are gradually brought in for different age groups," he says. "That's only come in over the last four years."

Prof Pollock, a public health doctor who has been researching rugby injuries for more than 10 years, and Prof Kirkwood, a former NHS nurse, say that removing collisions from school rugby would "reduce and mitigate the risk of injury" in pupils.

They warn that a history of concussion could "lower a person's life chances" across a number of measures including educational achievement and life expectancy. They also say that head injuries could increase the risk of dementia.

Mr Bradburn agrees more could be done to make junior rugby safer, but says banning tackles is not the way to go about it.

He says a better idea would be to classify youngsters by their weight rather than age, as is done in New Zealand. At the moment we have the situation of under-12s rugby, where you might have a boy who has gone through puberty, and one who hasn't," he says. "You get a boy weighing 60kg going up against one who is 20kg. At that stage it is more about maturation and puberty than it is simply about age," he adds. Citing previous

research into sports injuries in youngsters, Profs Pollock and Kirkwood say that rugby, along with ice hockey and American football, have the highest concussion rates. They say rule changes can make a difference, highlighting the Canadian ban on deliberate contact in ice hockey for under-13s.

But Mr Bradburn, who has been teaching rugby for 14 years, says the game is no different from any other contact sport. He says the important thing is to ensure that it is taught properly, and that staff are trained in dealing with any knocks that might be picked up.

He is not the only one who is sceptical. In 2016, the nation's most senior medics rejected a call for a ban on tackling in youth rugby.

Prof Tara Spire-Jones, of the University of Edinburgh, says while people should be careful playing sports where there is a risk of head injury, the scientific evidence isn't strong enough to justify drastic rule changes.

Benefits

"The data on specifically whether playing rugby or other contact sports in school increases your risk of dementia are not as robust yet due to a lack of large prospective studies," she says.

There are also many who argue that the health benefits of getting youngsters involved with sport outweigh any risks from concussion.

Pollock and Kirkwood say that under United Nations conventions, governments have a duty to protect children from risks of injury. But brain injury expert Dr Alan Carson believes experts should think very hard before bringing in rules which could mean fewer children want to take part in sport.

"The health crisis facing Britain's children is not concussion, but obesity and lack of exercise," he says.

Mr Jefferies says that taking tackling out of the junior game would deny youngsters the opportunity to get some much-needed exercise.

"We have got 300 kids in our junior teams, and when you have boys that age there is a lot of testosterone," he says.

"At the age of 11 and 12, they need to run around and be active. From the age of nine, when they are told they can tackle, all they want to do is tackle. It just smacks of the nanny state."



Phil Jeffries believes it would be more dangerous



Prof Allyson Pollock: Government has a "duty of care"



Dominic Bradburn says a ban would ruin the game

IN Tom Brown's School Days, the protagonist observed: "It's very odd how almost all English boys love danger; you can get ten to join a game, or climb a tree, or swim a stream, when there's a chance of breaking their limbs or getting drowned."

It is fair to say Tom's adventures with Scud, George and Flashman would have been very different had their teachers heeded the latest advice from experts at Newcastle University.

Writing for the British Medical Journal, Prof Allyson Pollock and Graham Kirkwood have called for scrums and tackles to be banned from school playing fields, arguing that most injuries in youth rugby are caused by collisions during the game.

Calling for the Government to step in, Professors Pollock and Kirkwood say ministers should "put the interests of the child before those of corporate professional rugby unions".

But Dominic Bradburn, director of sport at Oswestry School, is unconvinced.

Dangers

"You can't take tackling out of the game, it would ruin it," says Mr Bradburn, who has played the sport for Shrewsbury RFC.

Phil Jefferies, who coaches youngsters at Bridgnorth Rugby Club, says that taking tackling out of the junior game could actually make it more dangerous when children get older. "I think there's always merit in re-looking at sport and understanding the dangers involved," he says.

"My personal view is that what we need to do is to teach kids the correct techniques to scrummage and tackle, and give them the experience of this at a slower rate when they are small.

"If you take the tackling and scrummaging out of the game at school level, by the time they reach the age of 18 they will have no experience of it, and I think you will get a lot more injuries than you do now."

Mr Jefferies, who is 42, first started playing the game when he was eight years old. He says that in 34 years he has suffered from concussion twice, despite playing

Final whistle

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Eggington loses out in title defence

SAM Eggington was beaten in the first defence of his European title on Saturday night.

The Stourbridge fighter, only the week before named the Boxing Writers' Club's Young Boxer of the Year, was outpointed by Mohamed Mimouni for the welter strap on a split decision at the Manchester Arena.

The 23-year-old was the victor with one judge by four rounds, 116-112, but the other two went with Mimouni 116-112 and 115-113 respectively.

Eggington noticeably struggled to make the weight, having to strip completely naked at the weigh-in, with a towel covering his modesty, to tip the scales at 10st 7lb.

That looked to have played its part in a lethargic performance, with his opponent, nicknamed 'the Problem,' utilising his awkward southpaw skills to great effect.

The Frenchman was the mandatory challenger and vacated his European Union belt for the opportunity.

A rebuilding process at a new weight now awaits Eggington. He'd had the highest standing of any welter in the UK and had seized European honours with a chilling 10th round stoppage over Cefirino Rodriguez, at Arena Birmingham, on May 13.

Eggington had reeled off four straight stoppages over Daza Usher, Frankie Gavin, Paulie Malignaggi and Rodriguez. He now hopes his power will travel up to super welter. He's also held the Midlands, British and Commonwealth title.

Holdcroft nails the marathon distance in under three hours

THERE was a long awaited moment of retribution for one of Dudley King'swinford Running Club's own as Steve Holdcroft finally nailed a sub-three hour marathon time, clocking 2:57.12 in the Chester Marathon to take 117th place.

Gina Collins also completed the race in 2209th place in 4:57.44.

Closer to home a sizeable group took part in the Bells of Pattingham run, a race with a long history over fields, tracks and path of South Staffordshire.

Paul Richards was the first blue hoop home in 50.53, 135th place Carol Fisher claimed third in her age group and 168th overall in 52.41, Dave Garbutt was 181st in 53.40, Helen Hickman and Cindy Froggatt finished together in 54.35 in 201st and 202nd respectively, Marie Latreche was 215th in 55.22, Brian Lane 237th in 56.38, Lisa Kendrick 251st in 58.00, Julie Allen 256th in 58.18, Cilla Harding was 340th in 1:03.29, Debbie Richard was 449th in 1:21.56 and Jan Burbie finished in 1:31.21 to take 452nd place of the 454 runners completing the course.

Vipers touch down at rugby club



Black Country Vipers American Football team

STOURBRIDGE Rugby Club is to host another oval ball sport as the Black Country Vipers American Football team has signed up to play at Stourton Park.

Talks have been ongoing for several months, with both sides expressing excitement at the prospect of gridiron being played at the rugby club.

Rugby club chairman Robin Edwards said: "There's a synergy between our two sports that will provide excellent opportunities for young players from both clubs. With the American Foot-

ball season running from April to September, it is a perfect fit with our rugby season."

Ian Jewkes, CEO and general manager of Black Country Vipers, said: "The move provides us with excellent playing and training facilities, as well as the opportunity for players from both clubs to try out a different sport."

Taster sessions for 13-18-year-olds take place on October 15, November 19 and December 10 from 2-4pm. For more information visit www.blackcountryvipers.com

YELTZ ARE ON CLOUD No 9

Stourbridge 1 Halesowen Town 2

HALESOWEN threw the form book out of the window to win the No 9 derby against the odds.

Stourbridge looked the odds-on favourites for victory against their local rivals, with Gary Hackett's men having made an impressive start to the Evo-Stik Premier Division campaign, and Yeltz lying rock-bottom.

But the visitors ran out winners despite seeing less of the ball and creating fewer chances in front of 2,306 people at the War Memorial Ground in Amblecote.

The game lived up to its hype with both teams putting on an entertaining show. But the tense atmosphere gave way to crowd trouble from a small section of fans, with two flares being thrown onto the pitch during the game.

Halesowen's game plan was to catch Stourbridge on the counter-attack, and it paid off with two well-taken goals from striker Daniel Udoh.

Cushion

He opened the scoring on seven minutes, using his pace to break away and slotting past Matt Gould when one-on-one.

His second dealt a body blow to the Glassboys as it came on the stroke of half-time and gave the Yeltz a two-goal interval cushion.

Udoh played John McAtee through on goal but, as he burst into the box, his touch looked to be too heavy. But at full stretch he squared the ball to Udoh who had a simple tasking of slotting the ball home.

Stourbridge piled on the pressure in the second half as they sought a route back into the game. And they found the net on 63 minutes to drag themselves back into the contest when Ryan Rowe deflected in a Leon Broadhurst free-kick taken right on the edge of the box.

But Halesowen stood firm to claim the bragging rights, lifting them off the bottom of the

Gaskin delight at triathlon effort



Gaskin and the rest of the Team GB representatives at the world championships

A STOURBRIDGE triathlete put his endurance to the test, representing Great Britain in the world championships in Rotterdam.

Chris Gaskin, aged 45, finished 26th in his age category, 45-49, out of around 120 contestants from around the globe.

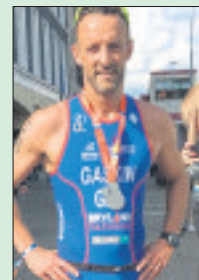
The discipline featured a 750m swim, followed by an 800m run to start the 20km bike ride and into a 5k run to finish.

Gaskin, who only took up the sport three years ago, was selected on the basis of a number of pre-qualification events and was delighted by his efforts.

He said: "It's up there as being one of the best experiences in my life. The whole occasion was so exciting and being involved with a global sporting event was a real dream."

"I felt very proud to represent GB and the feeling I got from competing will stay with me forever."

Gaskin, sponsored by Bryland Fire Protection and Lex Allan Estate Agents, added: "I entered the blue carpet and the grandstand packed with cheering supporters including my wife and son, to finish in a time of 1:11.45."



Chris Gaskin

Sykes rallies to second place in class

STOURBRIDGE driver Richard Sykes enjoyed a successful Rally Yorkshire, finishing second in class in his Bathams Brewery, The Body Clinic, Summit Platforms and G I Sykes Ltd-supported Citroën DS3 R3.

Sykes pushed hard off the start line aiming to finish first of the two-wheel drive cars, with new co-driver Steve Link calling the notes. After the opening two stages, Langdale and Staindale, Sykes was in second place in his class.

"Even though we were going as quickly as we could we lost a little bit of time in the first two stages to our main rival," he said.

"The car seemed a little underpowered so when we got to the first service halt we changed the engine map settings to suit the ultra-fast Yorkshire stages."

"It was good to have Steve co-driving, we've competed against each other for over ten years but we'd never competed together."

With the new engine map Sykes was now matching the pace of the class leader, with good times in the remaining stages of Gale Rigg, Cropton and Dalby. The car was still suffering from some power loss though.

"Unfortunately we couldn't make up enough time to get into the class lead," Sykes added. "We could've done with another three or four stages really."

"Second in class is a great result though and we also finished 22nd overall against some much more powerful four-wheel drive cars."

Reece seals place in championships

BLACK Country Triathletes did themselves proud at the Oulton Park Autumn Duathlon in Cheshire.

The morning Sprint involved a 5km run, 25km ride and a 5km run and was a qualifier for the European Duathlon Championships in October 2018 in Ibiza. Reece Ashfield was first home in 1:04:28, in an automatic qualifying third place in the 17-18 age group.

In the afternoon's Standard Distance Race, the English National Championship race for this distance, a 10km run, 40km bike and 5km run, Rob Kennard brought home the bronze medal, third in the 50-54 age group in 1:53:15.

*** The Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Ketley, Telford, Thursday, October 12, 2017

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